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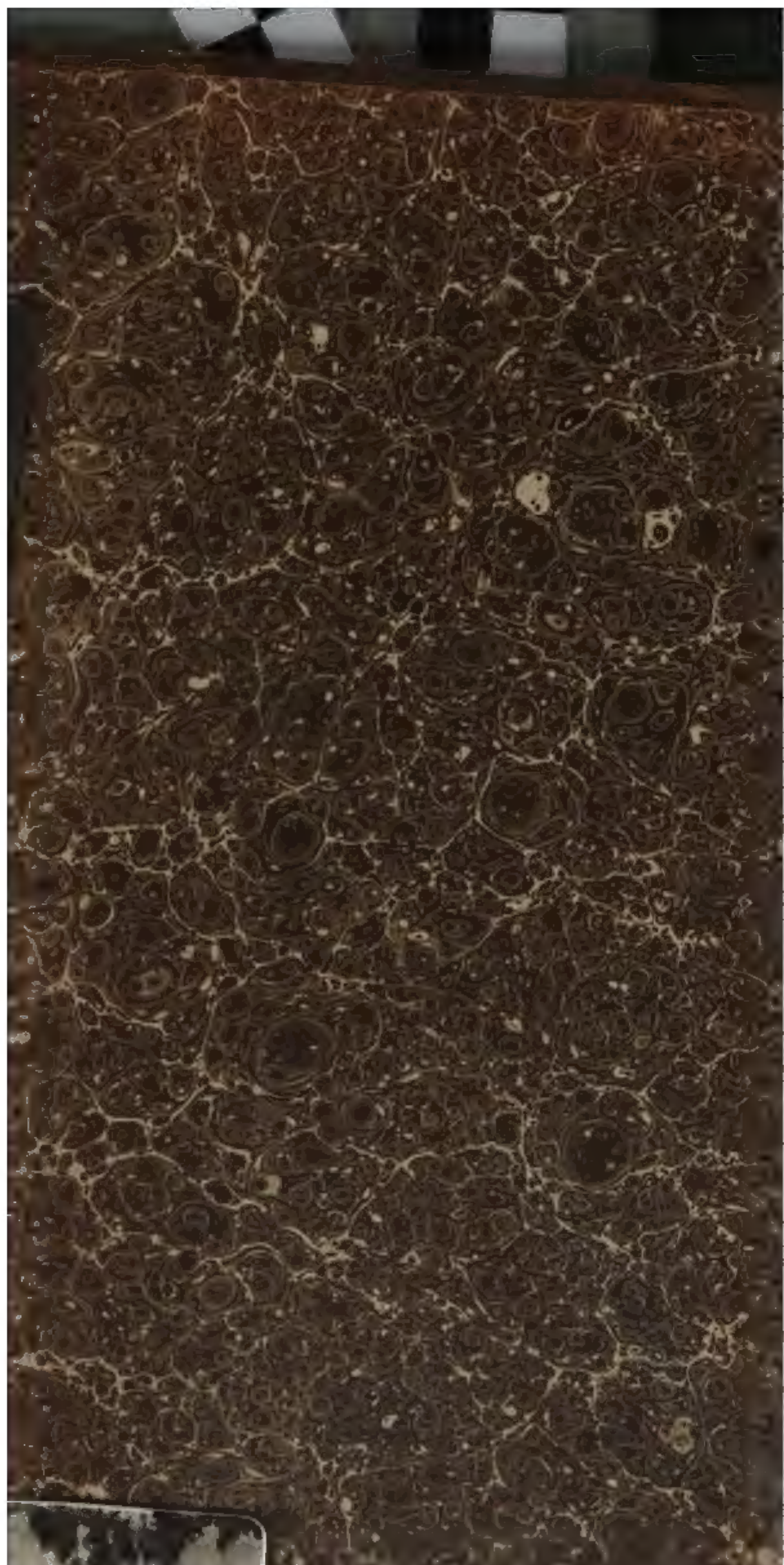
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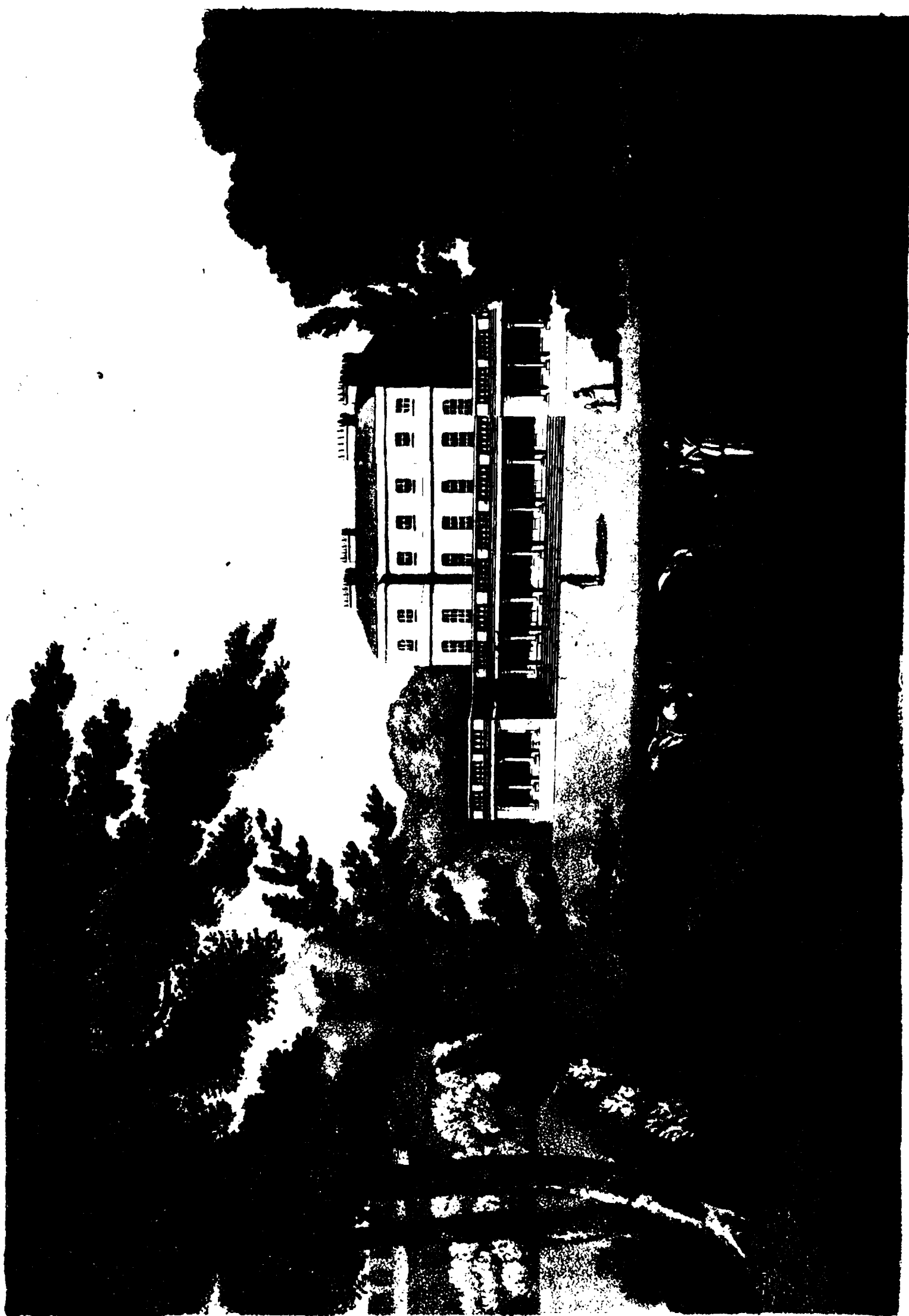


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THE
CHILD
OF
PROVIDENCE;

OR,
The Noble Orphan.

A NOVEL.

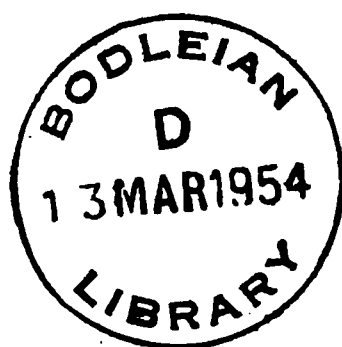
BY MISS H. L. PORTER.

Blessings ever wait on virtuous deeds,
And, though 'tis late—a sure reward succeeds.

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1820.



THE
CHILD OF PROVIDENCE ;

OR, THE
Noble Orphan.

CHAP. I.

THE STORM.

"I would you did but see how it chafes—how it rages—how it rakes up the shore!—But that is not to the point.—Oh! the most piteous cry of the poor souls!—Sometimes to see them, and not to see them!—Now the ship boring the sky with her main-mast, and anon swallowed with yeast and froth, as you'd thrust a cork into a hogshead."

SHAKESPEARE.

IN words, something like these, did the pale and terrified servant of the Rev. Mr. Monckley awaken his master—adding "for the love of heaven, Sir, do come down to the beach, and see the most dreadful sight your eyes ever beheld!"

The hope of affording some assistance to the sons of affliction, made the good man hasten on his clothes, and follow his servant with the utmost expedition.—There he beheld a scene to appal the most fearless! Every element seemed in horrid combination—the winds blew a hurricane—the rain descended in tor-

rents—the vivid lightning flashed with incessant glare—quickly followed by the most tremendous thunder, and if, amongst this almost deafening din, a moment's silence prevailed, the ear was struck with the heart-rending sound of guns fired as signals of distress, which no one could relieve or alleviate !

“Oh ! God of the universe,” cried Mr. Monckley, raising his hands and eyes to heaven—“have pity—have mercy on these otherwise devoted creatures ! —Oh ! thou that ridest on the whirlwind, and directest the storm, extend thy hand to these unhappy victims of thy wrath, or they are lost for ever !”

Mr. Monckley, however, contented not himself with praying for their relief ; he exerted every possible means to effect their rescue, urging the surrounding multitude (for the beach was covered with spectators of this awful sight) by money, entreaties and promises, to aid the poor sufferers, if in their power. He prevailed on some of them to get out two boats ; but the wind setting in shore, their efforts proved fruitless—the boats were upset, and the men themselves in the most imminent danger of destruction. Self-preservation is the first principle, and now they contented themselves with offering their prayers to that Power, who can still the tempest, and bid the stormy sea be calm.

The distress of the vessel seemed to increase. Mr. Monckley plainly discovered the different objects by the repeated flashes of lightning. One moment the heavens were all on fire—the next enveloped in thick darkness ! He could not discover whether it was a packet or merchant ship, as the masts were all gone by the board ; but he clearly discerned that

there were women as well as men. Now, as their last resource, they were getting out their boats. One full of people seemed striving to make land: the men on the beach sent forth loud shouts, if haply their voices could reach the wreck, to encourage the mariners to persevere in their attempts. They saw the boat now tossed up to the clouds—now sinking from their view—and heard shrieks of sorrow, with the groans of despair.

What a scene for the sensibility of such a mind as Mr. Monckley's! Unable to assist them, he ran about the beach in the utmost agony, regardless of the inclement weather, which threatened them all with its horrors! He even rushed into the sea, and was beaten back on the shore—yet still he could be hardly restrained, in the hopes of succouring the unfortunate company in the boat, for no vestige now remained of the vessel—she had broached to on a rock, and sunk instantly! Heavy seas continued to break over the boat, and washed away those who had not secured themselves on the deck; repeated screams followed thick after the peals of thunder! The moment of their fate approached, the boat rose to a tremendous height, struck on a sunken rock, about a mile from the shore, and was seen no more! A pensive sigh, with a trickling tear, Mr. Monckley gave to the manes of the unfortunate mariners, with a mental prayer, to that Being who saw fit to destroy them, that He would receive their souls into everlasting bliss!

It was now day-light, and the storm quickly subsided: it seemed as if it had accomplished its purpose, and the elements returned to their peaceful

state. The spectators were preparing to leave the beach for their homes; all mournful were their countenances; filled with the awfulness of the scene they had just witnessed, their hearts seemed depressed with grief, as if each had lost some loved friend or relative in the wreck.

A few remained with Mr. Monckley, straining their eyes towards the place where the boat had sunk, and eagerly watching each rolling billow, lest any body with the principle of life, yet unextinguished, should be washed up, and wafted to the beach. "Oh! righteous God!" exclaimed the good and pious man—"not one to be saved! Oh! that I could have been so fortunate as to have saved one of these unhappy persons; yet, in thy wrath thou art merciful, for, perhaps, a husband might have been preserved to deplore a beloved wife; some parent his hopeful and loved son: yes, yes, 'whatever is, is right.'"

After some time spent in this manner, he thought he saw something upborne on the waves, which still undulated from the agitation the sea had so lately been in, and various were their conjectures concerning it; it rode over each wave, from which circumstance they concluded it to be something light. While they were watching its approach, the body of a woman floated, and a large wave threw both that, and the object which had before engaged their attention, at a little distance from where they were standing.—"Heaven has in part heard my petition," cried Mr. Monckley, and flew to the spot to prevent another wave reclaiming its prey. They dragged the woman further up the beach, and took up something wrapped up, and secured in an old sail. Every one of this



CHILD of PROVIDENCE.

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small party were now fully employed ; each exertion was used to recover the woman, and they failed not to examine what this bulky bundle contained. A shout of joy and astonishment brought Mr. Monckley from the woman, to see what had occasioned the outcry : to his most infinite surprise he beheld an odd-fashioned cradle, with a sleeping infant safely nestled in it ! The envelope had prevented the water from injuring the babe, and the lightness of the structure had borne it on the waves. “ Oh ! Child of Providence ! ” cried he, bending over and embracing the cradle, “ Blessed is he who shall succour thee ! I adopt thee for my own. Thou shalt lie in my bosom,” continued he, gently taking it from its downy bed, “ and be unto me as a daughter. For heaven’s sake,” he added, “ strive to restore the woman to life ; the infant may belong to her.” He then, after impressing a tender kiss on the cheek of the lovely child, replaced it, with studied care, in its cradle, and, lifting it up, bore it in his arms towards the rectory, ordering the people, cautiously and carefully, to follow him with the body of the woman. He had not proceeded many paces, when David (his servant) ran after him, calling out—“ She lives ! she lives ! pray, Sir, come back.” A moment brought him to the spot. There were evident signs of returning life, though the respiration was agitated and convulsed. A great discharge of water had been obtained by friction, and rolling the body on the beach. Some drops of a cordial nature were administered. The poor woman opened her eyes, but the light appeared too powerful for her nerves. She closed them instantly—articulated some sounds in an unknown language—then,

with a little regained strength, uttered these words in Latin, at the same time making, with great effort, the sign of the cross on her breast :—" *Benedicta Maria! Agne Dei benedicte!*" She then gave a heavy sigh, turned on her side, and breathed her last. All the hope that Mr. Monckley had entertained of gaining information of the unfortunate crew, now sunk into the dust. He returned to the place where he had set down the cradle, and conveyed it to his own home.—" *Alas! poor innocent,*" cried he, "thou art in one moment bereft of all who had a natural claim to thee—thou alone art most miraculously preserved from the tempest! Be it my task to soften the fortune to which thou mayest be exposed!"

To the care of his sister he consigned his little charge, and dispatched a female servant to find out some one who could act the part of wet-nurse to his protégée, who now began to whimper, and grow restless from hunger.

Leaving it to the care of the woman, he retired to his closet to meditate on the events of the night, after having given every proper direction concerning the corpse which had been brought to the rectory, that it might have the rites of sepulture performed in due time. On examination, his sister reported to him, that the woman appeared too old to be the mother of the infant; besides, she thought the meanness of her apparel, and coarseness of her features rendered it unlikely; for the child's dress was rich, and its complexion of the fairest tint, and altogether the most beautiful little creature she ever beheld. She was certain she must belong to some great people of fashion, for when she was put to the breast, she took

it quite with an air of elegance. Mr. Monckley smiled at the simplicity of his sister, but complimented her sagacity in making such a discovery of the rank of an infant, which could not be more than a month old, in an action which the instinct of nature taught it in common with all others: however, he was secretly pleased to find the little stranger had established its interest so well; for all the domestics, as well as Mrs. Rachael Monckley, were unanimous in their praise of its beauty and pretty behaviour, which one, more cunning than the rest, attributed to its foreign education.

The pockets of the dead woman were next examined, to obtain some proofs of the country from whence she came; but no light was thrown on the subject from this investigation. They only contained a Latin mass-book—a rosary and cross—a few pieces of consecrated candles and bread, with some other relics, and about a dozen of different foreign coins of small value. All the conclusion that could be drawn was that the vessel was from some Catholic country, and consequently that they were foreigners.

Every circumstance being arranged for the decent interment of the unfortunate stranger, and for the present accommodation of the child, not omitting to lay by every article carefully that might, in some future period, tend to discover her origin, the good Mr. Monckley retired to take some repose, which he felt he much wanted, though the quick succession of thought which whirled through his brain, made him almost hopeless of obtaining it.

To seek that repose we will leave him, and give

our readers a little breathing time, after the turbulent scene, with which we opened our history of "The Child of Providence." And while it lies sleeping on the lap of Mrs. Rachael, who could not be prevailed on to quit to the nurse (longer than the necessary time for receiving its sustenance) the sweet little angel, as she repeatedly called her, we will take a review of the family, into whose hands, a circumstance next to a miracle, had placed all that remained of the shipwreck.

CHAP. II.

THE RECTORY.

MR. Monckley was a widower, of about six and forty. Two years before the period we are now upon, he had the misfortune to lose an amiable and beloved wife in child-birth, the infant accompanying its parent to the grave! He bore his affliction as a man, but he felt it as a man; and, although indefatigable in discharging his various clerical and social duties, it was plain to those who knew him in his happier days, that he was quite a different man; and his faithful old servant, David, would frequently observe, with a significant shake of his head, "Ah! poor master; he never joyed after my poor mistress died."

His establishment now consisted of one child, his first born, a boy near seven years of age—a single sister, two female servants, and honest David, who was his *fac totum*—though he dignified himself, by saying he was the rector's *bailly*.

Mr. Monckley's private fortune was but moderate. His parochial income was good: however, he was not in the habit of accumulating riches, as he laid great part of his revenue out in those funds, from which not much interest, such as is computed by pounds, shillings and pence, can be derived. He was contented to wait for his proportion till the great settling day, when he doubted not being amply recompensed by the dispenser of all good things for the premiums he had advanced. His character was mild and benevolent, and, if he had some little traits of shade, they were such as "flesh is heir to," proving him to be a good, though not a perfect man.

His sister was a plain maiden gentlewoman, of nearly his own age, but very inferior to him in understanding. She had never been called upon for the exercise of many virtues, nor had her failings been marked with any atrocity. Her mediocrity had kept her in a harmless tenor; and, if she had not been very useful in the world, she at least had done no injury to it; and was, what every one allowed her to be, a very good sort of woman. The general sarcasm of "the wicked wasp of Twickenham," as Lady Wortley called him, might, indeed, be applied to Mrs. Rachael Monckley, for to sum up the portrait, she had nothing of character in her.

Harry Monckley was a fine riotous spirited boy,

that would worry his aunt into indulgences, which the prudence of Mr. Monckley would sometimes find necessary to check, although he doated on him himself with all a parent's fondness : but with all his impetuosity, he was tender-hearted, open to conviction, and patient of reproof, even from his aunt, whom he loved and respected, at the same time that he saw her inferiority to his father. His father he revered, loved, and feared. The vivacity of his disposition often occasioned some little embroils ; but he would never cease crying till he was forgiven, nor ever needed pardon a second time for an offence of the same sort. He had various methods, however, of exercising the clemency of his aunt's nature in particular, and few days passed off that he did not weep for an hour the error of a moment. His aunt's fondness for him exposed her to more of his caprices than any body beside, and Mr. Monckley felt the necessity of sacrificing the pleasure of his company, (while he was good, and properly behaved) lest he should be quite spoiled by remaining at home, where he had too much the rule over every one. Henry was therefore placed at about ten miles distance with a respectable clergyman, who took young pupils that were immediately under his own tuition ; and all the boys, being older than little Monckley, he found it not so easy a matter to be Lord Paramount, as his aunt used to call him. He had not been there many weeks when the shipwreck happened, and it was an established rule with Mr. Monckley, which all the entreaties of Mrs. Rachael, or her nephew, could not controvert, that he should never come home but at the vacations. He frequently rode over to see him,

when the aunt failed not to fill his pocket with cakes, or some toy, that he might not forget her. She idolized the boy; but now the little foreigner Miss, which was the young stranger's title in the family, seemed to bid fair to rival Henry in her affections. She thought her brother would never awaken. She ardently longed to have some conversation, on what she believed a most essential point, namely, about baptism, and puzzled her poor brain to think what name they should give her, and what she would do for a surname, since they did not know what belonged to her family. She rejoiced when she heard her brother walk into the parlour, and ask how long it would be till dinner was ready. She hastened down from her chamber, which she had converted into a nursery, leaving the "sweet little angel" taking its dinner too.

The encomiums she poured forth on the dear child, precluded the very conversation she wished to have.—Hardly did she leave herself time to get her meal for talking, which the good creature frequently mistook for conversation. When the cloth was withdrawn, Mr. Monckley seemed inclined to consult his sister, or rather, which amounted to the same thing, to deliver his own opinion; for she was not in her disposition very unlike Mrs. Shandy, being exceedingly acquiescent, particularly in all her brother's sentiments, making it an article of her creed, that there never was such another man.

"We must name this little unfortunate being," cried he. "She must be called something to be sure," said Rachael, "or she will never know when she is spoken to."

“ I am thinking what name we can give it,” said Mr. Monckley.

“ I have been thinking of nothing else for these many hours,” returned Mrs Monckley.

“ Then, perhaps, you have fixed upon one,” said the brother.

“ But, suppose,” she rejoined, “ I should fetch the dear little soul here.”

“ That she may add her suffrage to ours, my dear sister,” said he, with a smile : “ but do so, my love ; I should like to see our little foundling.”

“ If it was a boy we should have no difficulty,” added sister Rachael ; “ for then we should have a precedent in Tom Jones.”

“ You are deeply read,” replied Mr. Monckley ; “ but let us have the little girl of our party.”

Away went Mrs. Rachael, and presently returned with the child, who seemed more disposed to sleep than to confer upon so important a subject as a name, and was as perfectly indifferent about it as if she had been of Juliet’s opinion.

“ What is a name ?

“ A rose, with any other name, would smell as sweet.”

The nurse brought the cradle, and the subject of discussion was laid in it, and placed by Mrs. Rachael. — “ I wish,” cried she, looking attentively at it, “ we could guess what country it came from.”

“ It must unfortunately all be guess work,” said her brother, “ and if we should by chance guess aright, we never could be certain we were so.”

“ If you thought she came from Italy, (for the

Italians you know are Papists) I should like to have her called Clementina ; it is a pretty name."

"And very applicable for one whom a tempest produced," returned Mr. Monckley.

"Nay, I do not know," said Rachael, not understanding the *equivoque* of her brother. "She may be a Grecian for any thing I know to the contrary ; for David said, that it was all the same as Greek, the poor dying woman spoke. Now as you talk Greek, brother, perhaps you may know some name that will sound pretty, for I should like to give her a pretty name, I own—suppose she did come from Greece."

"You will come to grease, sister," cried he, "if you hold the candle in that sloping manner." He blushed for being guilty of so poor a pun ; but in the course of our experience, we have always found that Cambridge men are more subject to that miserable shadow of wit, than those educated at Oxford. Mr. Monckley being of the former University, I hope will plead his excuse, if he should again fall into that error of barbarism. To play on words, should never be the practice of those who know their proper use ; and those who do not, endanger their safety by playing with edge tools : but to quit the author for the narrator—"I cannot," said Mr. Monckley, "fix on any appellation that is suitable to the situation from whence she was rescued. We might call her Marina from her being taken from the sea." This was quite above his sister's comprehension ; she could find no affinity.

"Marina, Marina, Marina," repeated she, as if calling the child : "No, brother, I do not like

Marina ; besides, perhaps, they will shorten it to Mary, and that is such a common name. Let me see," cried she, starting up, as if some lucky thought had come across her, " what is the day of the month ? The twenty-third of September. She must have been born in August. Suppose, my dear brother, we should christen her Augusta ! There's a sweet name ! Oh ! let it be Augusta. Do, dear brother, let it be Augusta.—Yes, it shall be Augusta, my love. Won't it like the name of Augusta ?—Brother, as I live the dear little creature is pleased. Look how it smiles, and grasps my finger.— Oh ! my sweet little dear Augusta !" she continued, taking up the child, and almost smothering it with kisses. " As soon as it can speak, it shall thank you for giving it such a pretty name."

" Well, then, Augusta let it be," said Mr. Monckley.

" Thank you, thank you, in the name of my dear little God-daughter ; for I must certainly stand for her at the font."

Just then Martha, a country girl, who was under the other female servant, came into the room to tell Mr. Monckley the undertaker was come from the next town, to receive orders respecting the poor woman's funeral, which was fixed for the next morning ; he went out to give the man proper directions.

Mrs. Rachael hastily told Martha how the sweet babe was to be named.

" Laws, *mistress*, it sounds very heathenish, methinks," cried Martha ; " I does not think it is a Scriptor name ; but she may be a heathen or a Papish for what we know. I wonders what country

she comes from. Law, Madam, how glad I shall be to hear her speak. I am thinking, as my master has such a power of learning, he will be able to understand her lingo main well."

"Understand her, Martha; why, shall we not all understand her?"

"I don't know, Ma'am; but don't you think, till she learns English, she will speak the same lingo as the country she was born in? Won't that be most naturalist to her de ye think?"

"She now speaks the language of nature," said Mrs. Monckley, "and that we plainly understand. See how she smiles and coos her grateful thanks for our care and kindness to her."

"Law, don't you think she is the perfect moral of my poor mistress, some how about the eyes?"

"No surely; your mistress's eyes were nearly black, and my little Augusta's *celestial blue*, as the poet says."

"Well, Ma'am, I does think they are some'at alike for all that—a sort of something, some how."

Mrs. Monckley would not agree with the *fille de chambre* in this point, so Martha very prudently gave it up, being too well bred a servant ever to differ materially with the opinion of her superiors. It was now time that the little Augusta, as Rachael called her every moment, should have her supper; and, indeed, truth must be told, she seemed more attached to her nurse than to any one else in the house.

By the time the little foreign Miss was satisfied with what the nurse could do for her, Mr. Monckley returned into the parlour. Rachael was going to carry the child to her chamber.—"Come, dear

brother," said she, presenting it to him, "give our sweet Augusta a kiss, and wish her a good night."

"Dear babe! sweet helpless innocent! how calmly thou sleepest, ignorant of the dangers thou hast just escaped, and regardless of the evils thou mayest still encounter!"

"She shall not encounter any," cried his sister; "I will protect her from all injuries." Mr. Monckley, not attending to his sister's interruption, continued to apostrophize: "How hard thy fate! All thy relatives ingulphed in the merciless ocean, and, at the tenderest age," ("I always thought the time of teething was the most hazardous," whispered Rachael to the nurse) "thrown naked and friendless on a foreign shore."

"What can my brother mean?" cried Rachael, in the same tone of voice. "Naked!—why, she is clothed like a Princess; and how can he call the coast of Devonshire a foreign shore? Is it not in England. To be sure she was friendless, because all the rest of the ship's company are drowned; but she is not friendless now; I am afraid my poor brother is beside himself for want of sleep, to talk so oddly."

As this speech was uttered in a low voice, and Mr. Monckley was inwardly praying for his little protégée, he either did not hear, or did not chuse to notice the extreme simplicity of his well-meaning sister; but wishing all a good night, retired to his chamber, to pass the remainder of the evening in study, which was his usual custom.



Augusta Monckley.
The Child of Providence' Page 1

CHAP. III.

GREAT BUSINESS PERFORMED.

THE next morning, which happened to be Sunday, Mrs. Monckley rose earlier than usual, to get every thing in order for the several purposes of going to church—standing God-mother—and being present at the funeral of the drowned woman: but while she was dressing, a thought occurred to her of infinite difficulty to be surmounted. She was delighted with the point she had gained of having the child's name Augusta. Her exultation, indeed, was much greater than the occasion required, for her brother had by no means a *shandean* predilection for particular names, on the contrary he was perfectly indifferent about the matter. She repented she had not talked about the surname the evening before.—“What shall we do?” said she to Martha, who was helping to tie up her gown tail, which was a white lutestring, or rather, which had been white: but from length of time, possessed more of the farina, than the petal of the lily: however, it was decorated with pink ribbands, and, as Martha said, she looked as well as hands and pins could make her; a truth which Mrs. Rachael was not inclined to deny.—“But what shall we do!”

said she, "for we shall never have time before the bells ring to settle what name to give Augusta."

"Laws, Ma'am, why isn't her name to be Gustar at last? I thought as how it was quite fixed, as I may say, all but crossing and sprinkling."

"How foolish you talk, Martha; what, would you have her be without a surname?—Have you not two names?"

"Sartainly, Madam; but then I was born with one name."

"And she was born with one name, no doubt; but as that name is buried in the sea we must give her another. You would not like to have her grow up only with the name of Augusta; it is like a dog or a cat to have only one. To be sure all the servants and the neighbours would call her Miss: but Miss Augusta—no, that does not sound well. Do, pray, Martha, run down, and see that every thing is ready for breakfast. Stop, only pin my handkerchief behind—I can manage all the rest—and tell your master the water boils, and I am going to make the tea. I am so impatient to talk with him about the name, that I am all in a twitter, and can hardly stick a pin."

"I hope, my dear Rachael, you have had a better night than I," answered Mr. Monckley to his sister's inquiry how he did.—"I have had very little sleep, and my broken slumbers have been occupied with all the dreadful events of yesterday—dreaming of nothing but earthquakes, hurricanes, and falling down precipices: but how," continued he, "is the dear little girl, whom I am to make a Christian of—this morning?"

“And that I take to be the only true Christian, and so it will be found, I dare say, by and bye.” Here Rachael touched on a string, to which every note in the scale of her brother was in unison. He was a good man, as we have before declared, but he had his weaknesses, and certainly a want of liberality is a weakness. He was too partial to the tenets of his own religion, and although he did not carry his predilection so far as the bigoted Catholic, to believe and assert that those out of the pale of a particular church could not be saved, yet he accounted the piety of a Catholic “nothing worth, and no prayer in the whole Liturgy was put up with more fervency than that, for the conversion of Jews, Turks and Infidels; to the last an asterisk was made, with a note written by himself,” by which we are to understand, “the Catholics or Papists are fully meant.”

“Why, yes, my sister,” said he, in return to Mrs. Rachael’s confession of her faith, “I esteem it a good arising from evil, that our dear little charge escaped the terrors and danger of shipwreck, to have her soul properly taken care of. Her parents were undoubtedly Papists: I call them Papists in preference to Catholics, for we are Catholics too, though not fettered and tied down by the corruptions of Romish worship.”

“Catholics?” repeated Rachael, “I do not like to be called a Catholic, neither.”

“If you understood Greek, sister, I could explain it in five minutes.”

“But as I do not, brother, I am willing to be guided by you. - So let us say no more about it; and while you are drinking your bason of tea (for it is

almost stone cold) do let us think what surname little Augusta is to have, for we must not do things by halves, that would be niggardly."

"True, Rachael, that is to be thought of: come, you were lucky in finding a pretty name yesterday. I suppose you have read some Novel lately, and the authors are never niggardly, as you say, in giving pretty or grand names to their heroines: shall it be Beach, because she was found on one! Or shall it be Devonshire, as it happened to be that coast? Speak your opinion freely."

"Why then, brother, I must say I do not like the name of Beach; it is too common a sound, and Devonshire is too long; not but it would look well too when she writes her name. Let me see," taking out her pencil, and writing on the napkin, "I am most sincerely yours to command, Augusta Devonshire. She will be taken for the Duke's wife! No; I do not like it, neither. Dear, dear, what shall we do? Hang the bells for jangling so: I am sure the sexton is before his time. I shall not be able to say my prayers as I should, I am so very much puzzled."

"Well then I will settle it; we will give her our own name, and when she grows up she can change it, if a good occasion offers."

Whether this arrangement met the wishes of Mrs. Rachael we cannot tell, for the chiming was finished, and Mr. Monckley took his hat from the peg, and desired his sister to follow him as soon as she could.

The cavalcade was soon assembled, consisting of Mrs. Rachael Monckley and the nurse, very decently dressed, with the infant, who was arrayed in the christening suit, which Henry had worn, and which

had been put in best order for the lying-in that had proved fatal to Mrs. Monckley; then followed a very respectable farmer and his wife, as the other sponsors, and the cook, with Martha, brought up the rear.

Between the services, the coffin, containing the body of the stranger, was brought into the church. The sponsors joined, and the names of Augusta Monckley was most audibly given by Mrs. Rachael, and repeated, with great solemnity, by the rector over the corpse. He then deposited the remains of the unfortunate victim of the storm in the chancel, and, returning to his place, delivered an excellent and pious sermon on the instability of human happiness, and the necessity of always being in a state of preparation for sudden death.

As soon as he came back to the rectory he called for the child, and, pressing it in his arms, breathed a prayer, that the good work he had begun might be perfected in her.—“I can, at least,” said he to the farmer, who (with his wife) was invited to partake of the christening dinner, “I can, at least, give her a good and proper education; and, bless God, most fervently, that I have added a member to the true gospel, and prevented the hazard of her soul from being corrupted by the error of papacy. Fortunate, happy child, to be thus initiated in the only faith in which we are certain to be saved!”

“Aye, doctor,” answered farmer Hodson, “it would have been a pity for such a sweet little Miss to be counting her beads, and praying to a cross, when it would be more suiting to play with a baby

doll, or, mayhap, in process of time, to be made a nun ; to have some nasty bald-pated friar pulling her about, for I am told they are as rampant as rams, and she must not complain, be she ever so untoward to his will ; for then there is penance, and purgatory, and the pope, and the devil. Aye, aye, little Miss, what is your name ?—your lot fell on fair ground, let me tell you, to get made a Christian of, and set in the right road to heaven by our rector, who knows the path, if constantly walking in it, can teach a man. And so, doctor, though dinner be not come in, that jug of ale looks so smiling and tempting, if you please, I will drink the young Christian's health, and thanked be God, and you, for making her so. It was a lucky accident, faith," added he, taking a hearty pull at the home-brewed.

Though Mr. Monckley did not declare his sentiments, yet he certainly joined with Mr. Hodson in thinking the providential escape of the only one from the shipwreck, looked like the Divine interposition in favour of Protestantism : and thus, by a fatal and most dreadful accident to a number of souls, was this little creature made a Protestant. Happy, indeed, for her, but purely the effect of chance. Had she been cast on the shore of Barbary, the believers of Mahomet would have equally rejoiced ; and on the accident of being born in this or that climate, does our religion in general depend. In how few instances are any creeds adopted ? We are of that persuasion which our parents were born and bred in ; choice has no more to do with it, than it has in where, or when, we shall be born. Happy is it for us, that we have

a Being for our Creator, who will hear our prayers in whatever language or form they are preferred, and will reward the virtuous, be his country, religion, or complexion, what it will!

CHAP. IV.

A VISITOR.

Mrs. Rachael still thinking of her dear little nephew, could not rest on the following day, till she had prevailed on her brother to take a ride over to the school, and carry Henry a large piece of christening-cake, "and to be sure to tell him what a pretty little girl she had dug out of the parsley-bed, and hoped he would be a very good boy, that papa might be induced, for once in a way, to let him come home for one day to see the dear pretty poppet." Mr. Monckley, equally fond of his son, found no difficulty in complying with his sister's request; therefore ordering David to saddle his grey mare, he soon equipped himself for his morning's expedition, bespeaking the hour of dinner accordingly.

He had not long left the house, when a loud ring at the gate announced a visitor, and Martha threw Mrs. Rachael into the utmost trepidation, by running up stairs quite out of breath, to tell her 'squire Malvern, of the Park, was come, and, she believed, he

was crazed, for he was hallooing and whooping like a mad thing, and said, as her master was from home, he must see her mistress. Poor Rachael, who, like many ladies, never thought herself fit to be seen in the dress she happened to have on, and too much hurried and flustered, as she said, hastily turned her apron, and adjusted her cap, as she went down the stairs to receive the 'squire, whom at all times she feared more than she loved, and now heartily wished at Jericho for his unseasonable visit.

"How do you do, Mrs. Rachael Monckley? How do you do? Why, I am come to see the sight; they tell me your brother has taken a sea-monster. Do you make a shew of it at so much a piece, or will you let a friend see it out of pure love?"—Rachael stared at this abrupt address. "Sir, what can you mean? A sea-monster!"

"Well, but I hear parson Monckley has got a great prize from the ship that was wrecked the other day. Now I must see it, for you know, as lord of the manor, I have a right to all waifs and strays."

"This was not able to stray, however," answered Rachael, rather poutingly: "An infant of a month old is not likely to stray far, and, I think, it will be hard if my brother has not a right to that he so honestly came by, for it might have been waved back into the sea in a moment, if he had not snatched it from destruction, and then it would have died either an heathen or a Papist, and now it is a Christian, and has a soul to be saved, and all through my brother's means."

"But I must see it, and I will see it," vociferated the 'squire. "I hear it is as beautiful as an angel;

so, my dear Madam Rachael, do ring the bell, and order the little sailor down."

The request was rather ungraciously complied with by Mrs. Rachael. She went herself to fetch the child, who happened to be awake, and in perfect good humour.

"Tallio! my little Venus," cried out the 'squire: "why, what news do you bring us from Neptune's court? How did you arrive, on the back of a Dolphin, or in a flat-bottomed floating fly-boat, eh? God bless your little smiling face! Let me have it; faith, I shall run away with Venus."

"My brother, Sir, has already christened her. Her name is Augusta, which, I think, sounds more Christian-like than——."

"Than an heathen Goddess, I allow, Madam," said the 'squire, bowing low, as he held the child in his arms; "but some of your brother's books, if ever you read them, will tell you Venus rose out of the sea, to which circumstance I alluded when I called her by that name. Did you never meet with the history of the heathen gods?"

"God forbid I should read such profane stuff! I have read the history of the only God—the God of the Israelites."

"The God of the present Israelites," cried he, delivering Augusta to Mrs. Rachael, "is the mammon of unrighteousness. Money is their God: I am sure I have found it so while I was in town. There is that hopeful nephew of mine surrounded by their black squinting faces—confound him—a blockhead—and after all he must be my heir! Oh! that heaven in its mercy had sent me a child to cut him out!

These d—d sons of circumcision will, as soon as I am dead, begin to grub up my fine oaks to make tabernacles of." His own concerns now had taken possession of all his thoughts, and he threw himself down in a chair, and fell into a fit of musing, which Rachael not being disposed to interrupt, stole softly out of the room, and left 'squire Malvern to his own meditations, which possessed him so long, that he fell fast asleep before he had half finished them.

This 'squire Malvern was a great man, and, indeed, the only great man in the parish. He was the patron of the rectory, and possessed all the property of the village. Malvern Park, where stood a superb gothic mansion, was about four miles from Mr. Monckley's house.

An early disappointment in the tenderest passion had soured the temper of Mr. Malvern, and prevented his forming any matrimonial engagement while at an age to hope for heirs.—To have a child of his own was not, indeed, his wish for a great while; but a quarrel, which had arisen between him and his elder brother, (who had succeeded to an Earldom in the kingdom of Ireland) had determined him to marry to cut out his nephew from the entail. The estate, which 'squire Malvern possessed, was in right of his mother settled on him and his heirs, and, unless he had children, his nephew was undoubted heir at law. From his exclamation concerning the tribe of Israelites, we may learn, that this nephew was no favorite of his, and it is to be lamented, and even wondered at, that the next possessor is seldom a favorite with the present. Self-interest is so inherent a principle in most men, that they cannot divest themselves of

THE NOBLE ORPHAN.

that illiberal idea, of their next heir wishing them dead, that they may come into immediate possession of their property. Thus they behold them with a jealous eye, and weaken the respect they might otherwise receive: and, on the other hand, there are too many young men who look on an uncle, particularly, as a kind of Steward, who unjustly withholds their lawful possessions. In this predicament stood both Mr. Malvern and his nephew, the Earl of Glamore; the one hated the other for being in the line of inheritance of an estate, which would quickly be dissipated among gamblers and Jews; the other abused the old rascally hunks for living so long to keep him out of his right.

The quarrel had not, indeed, originated between these amiable relations; but the misconduct of the present Earl had widened the breach considerably; and although Mr. Malvern had gone up to Town on some particular law business, in which both were concerned, and were obliged to meet at a master in chancery's office, they were not even upon speaking terms with each other; the consequence of which was, that Mr. Malvern did all the injury to the estate that he could, within the letter of the law, and so deprived himself of many enjoyments that would have made his life more comfortable, as well as respectable, for the narrow and debasing satisfaction of hurting the next heir as much as possible; to effect which, he renewed all the leases for as long a time as they could be granted, and, provided the tenants paid their rents, never checked their encroachments, or failure of keeping their farms in repair; for which he was

extolled as the best landlord in the world, and execrated by his nephew as the worst steward.

The living Mr. Monckley held, he had promised to bestow on Henry, who was to be educated for that purpose, and if he found his death approaching at the time the boy was at age to take possession, in order to prevent his nephew having the presentation, he had determined to prevail on Mr. Monckley to resign in favour of his son, for which he (Mr. Malvern) would make him an equal compensation. This appeared very friendly to Mr. Monckley; but such a mind as the 'squire's was not capable of possessing that noble principle. His apparent beneficence resulted solely from the view of plaguing and disappointing his heir.

To dispossess him entirely from the estate, he some years before the commencement of this history, made an effort to have an heir of his own. At the age of sixty-nine, he married a low bred farmer's daughter, or about twenty-five, whose robust charms seemed to promise him the accomplishment of his wishes, in at least making him a nominal, if not real, father. The vulgarity of her manners, and coarseness of her education, with the upstart superiority which she assumed, rendered this experiment almost the death of him, and would, probably, have put Lord Glamore in speedy possession, had not the friendly fates interposed, and after two years being tormented with a female fiend, as he named her, set him once more at liberty, by cutting her thread of life. Sick of his matrimonial venture, he resolved to let things take their own course, and failed not to rejoice each returning birth-day, that he was as likely

to live to the next, or even to reach to an hundred, as any man in the county of Devon.

But it is time to awaken him from his nap, which he had very comfortably taken in Mr. Monckley's arm chair, and, probably, would have continued longer, if the cook had not come in to look at the clock, that she might prepare dinner against her master's return. The 'squire started on his feet, surprised to see the hour, and hardly knowing where he was, the cook, in the utmost confusion, dropped her awkward curtesy, and was going out without her errand; but the 'squire, who was sometimes addicted to a coarse kind of gallantry, seized her by the petticoats, and swore she had stolen a pair of gloves from him.

"Indeed, indeed, your honour I has not," cried the blushing girl.

"Yes, you have, you saucy baggage, and I will have them again from your ruddy lips," at the same time smacking them with great glee. The girl was glad to find the 'squire so jococious, and particularly too, as he gave her a shilling, and a chuck under the chin. Espying his gloves, whip and hat, lying on the floor—"Lord! here are your honour's gloves," said she, simpering, and presenting them, "that you said I had stole."

"Well, then, as I accused you falsely, you may give me my kisses back again." But Susan, who had been sufficiently towzled, and thought too he might wish to have his shilling returned, ran out of the room grinning from ear to ear, saying to David, who she bid order the 'squire's horses, "that she never seed such a man in her born days as 'squire

Malvern ; she dared to say he had been a good one in his time, that he had ;” and, with this notable reflection, she began to lay her meat down to the fire.

CHAP. V.

THE HAPPY PAIR.

MR. Monckley found great pleasure in his little visit ; for, in addition to the joy he felt in pressing his beloved and only child to his bosom, he had the satisfaction of hearing a very favourable account of his daily improvements and good conduct, together with ~~having for an hour or two~~, the conversation of a worthy and sensible man. He had been many years acquainted with Mr. Bendley, who with the first rate abilities, joined to the fairest prospect on his out-set in life, was condemned to wear it away in obscurity in a retired village, on a curacy of forty pounds a-year, with a growing family, and a wife of so delicate a frame of health, that, though she was willing to assist him, she had daily cause to regret, that power fell short of the inclination.

“ What business had he to marry ?” cries the cold phlegmatic sexooner. “ What business has he to be hungry ? What business have persons, who are not rich, to have passions or appetites of any kind ? It

were as well to say, what business had he to be born ? Is it then only the proud lord of acres, with no other merit, who is to have the exclusive privilege of indulging a natural and laudable inclination ? Or the proud money-getting tradesman, that has a right to chuse the path which leads to the most endearing and social intercourse ? What a fine world would it be if such rulers were to govern it ! It is necessary for the world that there should be marriages, but not at all so that every body should be rich. If the poor man does not complain, nor beg of us to supply his scanty board from our overwhelmed table, let us have the complacency to suffer him to enjoy his little with the content that sits smiling on his face, and not cruelly and inhumanly dash his cup with bitter reproof. It savours of envy and illiberality.

Mr. Bendley took ten young boys, and with the advantages he drew from thence, and sometimes writing a few moral essays, in prose and verse, with a uniform and strict economy, he never suffered any man to call twice upon him with a bill, nor ever sent abject and virtuous poverty from his door without relief. Shall such a man be grudged the indulgence of a tender, sensible companion, whose mind was in perfect unison with his ? Riches might make them greater, but not happier ; their life

“ Was harmony itself,
“ Attuning all their passions into love ;
“ Where friendship full exerts her softest pow’r,
“ Perfect esteem, enlivened by desire
“ Ineffable, and sympathy of soul ;
“ Thought meeting thought, and will preventing will,
“ With boundless confidence.”

And, no doubt, the world is much more obliged to, and benefited by such a man, living in this manner, than to a dozen dashing fox-hunting parsons, who keep drudges to do the work themselves are unfit for.

Mr. Bendley and his loved Amelia were all the world to each other, and happy for them they were so; for in the village there was no better society than a few farmers, illiterate and “unfeeling as the clods from whence their wealth they drew.”

A visit to this little retreat of happiness always gave the good Mr. Monckley pleasure, attended with pain. “Such once was my state,” was an observation he never failed to make, accompanied with a sigh of regret, that such happiness could no more return.

He had made a long detail to his friends of the dreadful shipwreck, and, in his relation, drew many tears from his auditors. Poor little Henry, who was standing between his knees, looked up with his pretty innocent face, which might be said to be stained with weeping, for he had rubbed his little grubby hands over his eyes and cheeks, and begged most earnestly that he might not be forced to stay till the Christmas holidays, before he saw the poor little girl, declaring, “how very good he would be for such an indulgence.”

Mr. Bendley, equally desirous of beholding “the Child of Providence,” by which appellation Mr. Monckley usually spoke of her, told Henry he should be gratified. One of the pupils had not been well, and his father had sent him a little poney, which he would not scruple to lend to his favourite Henry.—“I will,” said Mr. Bendley, “invite both your son and myself to eat part of your Michaelmas goose, and take a bed with you. My dear Amelia will exert

herself to keep the rest of our young fry in order for the time."

This according most perfectly with the wishes of Mr. Monckley, he took his leave; received a kiss from Henry, for his aunt, and the sweet little baby, and arrived safely at home.

In consequence of some conversation with his friend, Mr. Monckley began to meditate on what means he should take to make inquiries after ships that were missing from foreign parts. He could fix on no plan that suited him. Many he formed, and as many were rejected. The most natural way was, by advertisement in the papers. This he had nearly fixed on, when some scruples of Mrs. Rachael's suggested by her encreasing fondness for the child, interposed:—"Can she be happier, my dear brother, than it is in our power to make her? If you had found a large sum of money, or a casket of diamonds, I should be among the first to advise you to make it known to the whole world, that the right owner might regain his property: but this lovely child certainly lost its parents in the ship. Will distant relations care any thing about her? And granting she should be an heiress, perhaps some vile hard-hearted uncle, (like him we read of in the babes in the wood, which, no doubt, is a true history) might, for the sake of getting her estate, clap her into a nunnery, and who would say him nay? Here she will not be rich; but do the rich enjoy so much happiness in this world? and in the next, we know how hard it is for them to get thither. There is that bawling 'squire Malvern, with all his thousands a-year, can there be a more unhappy being? No, my dear brother, do

not be prevailed on to part with this child, which Providence has, for wise purposes, thrown in your way. Let me intreat it of you. If it is designed that she should ever find her family, heaven will, in its own time, disclose it to her; at least suspend your inquiry till you have instructed her in religion, for she cannot yet be much benefited by being christened."

Poor Rachael had so wrought up her passions, that her sobs and tears now rendered her incapable of carrying on her harangue to any further length. Her brother, who had every sense of feeling that arises from a tender heart, strove all in his power to comfort her, and kissing her cheek, assured her he would not determine on any point till he had again seen Mr. Bendley, and even then nothing should be decided without her concurrence.—"Ah!" cried she, wiping away her tears, which she was unwilling should flow when the occasion that called them forth had ceased, "then I am happy; for if you will not act but by my consent, I shall never be brought to give my yea to a proposal, by which I should lose all my comfort and joy. No, my sweet love, you shall never be parted from your own aunty; tho' I dare say, when she first begins to speak, she will call me mamma. Oh! how charming to be called mamma by such a beautiful little angel! Well, I did think Henry was the sweetest child in the world; but this beats him all to sticks: for complexion he is quite a fool to her! What a delight will it be to hear her prattling, and crying pa—pa, ma—ma. Don't you think it a surprising thing, brother, that they should always be the first words a child speaks?"

“ They cannot possibly speak any other first sister.”

“ To be sure, then, heaven ordained it should be so, to endear them to their parents.”

“ There is a beautiful and tender idea, Rachael, in your supposition; but the effect proceeds from a natural cause. Children speak many words before they have teeth, and those are labial, that is, proceed from an action of the lips. If you pronounce the words papa and mamma, you will find your lips alone are engaged; and, by carefully going through the whole alphabet, you will clearly discover which letters are labial, and which are dental, called so from the teeth being employed in the formation of those sounds. You may find all this fully explained to the meanest capacity, if you will look over ‘ Sheridan’s Art of Reading,’ which you will see in my library, and which is necessary for every one to peruse, whether to teach others, or correct themselves: and I do wish, my dear sister, you would make those lectures a part of your study; for the want of an early education, joined with a provincial dialect, will give a vicious pronunciation, which is very inelegant.”

However Mr. Monckley had pleased her with complying with her wishes respecting Augusta, he extremely dissatisfied her with the latter part of his speech; for, to give her her due, she was as wise about labial and dental sounds, as if those sounds had never reached her ears; so that his using words she was totally ignorant of, did not offend her; but she could not help being piqued at his reflecting, as she conceived, on her virtue and morality, by calling her discourse “ vicious,” she having made this translation

of his meaning in her own mind: "I don't know, brother," said she, with a tone of vexation, "what you can charge me with that is vicious. I am sure my own conscience does not accuse me of having any vicious thoughts, though I may not not be able to put them in such new-fangled speeches as you may have learned at the University. If I had not a good education, the more's the pity for me; our father thought it enough that one of the family should be a scholar. It was not my choice to be brought up as a drudge in a farm-house." Thus she was going on, when her brother tenderly taking her hand, "My dear Rachael," said he, "you totally misconceive my meaning; you have the best heart in the world, which is superior to every worldly wisdom. Nothing could be farther from my intention than to cast the least reflection upon you. I will, however, explain myself more fully another time; for now I must go ~~and see how poor neighbour Jones~~ does, after his falling from a ladder in repairing the roof of his house, which was damaged in the late storm." Rachael was glad that any thing should put an end to her brother's lecturing, as she called it, and readily accepted his concession, to escape any farther conference.

On the appointed day arrived Mr. Bendley, with the delighted little Henry, who struggled from the kisses and caresses of his aunt, so impatient was he to see the baby, who was brought down in its cradle into the parlour,—“O dear! O dear!” cried the boy, clapping his hands together, “what a pretty little baby it is! O do look, aunt, how it laughs. O you sweet little creature! may I kiss you? O what pretty eyes! and what pretty little fat hands!”

Mrs. Rachael took the child, which was a remarkably sprightly one, upon her lap, and Henry, with all gentleness and caution, put his arms round her, and kissed her dimpled cheek. The boy seemed wild with transport; nor could he be prevailed on to leave his aunt's side, while Augusta sat on her knee. Mr. Bendley gazed on it, till the tears stole silently down his face. Henry perceived it: "Why do you cry, my dear master?" said he, kissing his hand, "the little girl is very happy now; see how she laughs and plays."

"Sweet innocent!" said Mr. Bendley, "may she be ever happy! May the evils which threatened her life, end with the misfortunes of her parents!"

But the annals of infancy are simple and uniform: permit us then to adopt the method of the ancients, and introduce a chorus, who shall tell you how Augusta improved in person and manners every day; and although we never heard but that she did and said as children have ever done or talked for these five thousand years; yet Mrs. Rachael still persisted in her first assertion, that every action and every word was accompanied with a peculiar grace.

Henry doated upon her, and nothing contributed so much to keep him in order, as telling him Augusta should reprove him as soon as she could speak.

Mr. Malvern, it should be related, called frequently at the rectory, and, in a fit of generosity gave Mr. Monckley a bank note of fifty pounds for the use of the orphan, promising the same sum annually, that she might receive every advantage from education. This conduct in the squire gave Mrs. Rachael a more favourable opinion of him than she ever had bestowed upon him: and she was once heard to say, "She did

not doubt, though he had his failings to be sure, yet, for her part, she believed, if he had made choice of a well behaved woman, who carried herself like a gentlewoman, and ten or fifteen years older than the flirt he married, he would have made a more *responsible* figure;" at the same time drawing herself up, and stealing a slight glance over the chimney piece, where was hung a looking glass.

The sweetness of Augusta's disposition, with her docility of manners, and quickness of apprehension, made her the delight of every one who was acquainted with her. The best masters were procured to give her lessons in dancing, singing, and playing. Mr. Monckley undertook the forming her mind, and Mrs. Rachael was no less assiduous in teaching her plain work, and making her notable, which she thought the first, if not sole accomplishment in a woman.

In compliance with the permission we have taken ~~from our readers, and with the ancient precedent,~~ we shall skip over ten or twelve years as suits our convenience or inclinations; for with all the partiality so natural in authors to themselves, and their performances, we have not the vanity to suppose we can, like Sterne, write two entertaining volumes, on an incident not one day old; and, on retrospection, we have not yet advanced a week since first we introduced "The Child of Providence." This chasm of ten or twelve years must then be filled up by the reader's imagination, by which the author will be saved a great deal of trouble, and no doubt, the rest will be pleased, by having their conjectures their own way, and tricked up in the fashion most congenial to their own inclinations.

CHAP. VI.



HENRY had now, been entered at the same University, and at the same College where his father had studied; the vacations were as ardently wished for by him, as ever they had been while he was a boy at Mr. Bendley's. His affection for Augusta had never felt an abatement since he first saw her an infant in his aunt's arms. He used to spend all his spare money in toys and play-things for her, while she was a child, and now, every publication he thought suitable for her, every new song, or piece of music, was purchased to present to her.

He was himself musical, and his greatest joy was to accompany her with his flute or violin, while she played or sung. She had received a fine grand pianoforte, as a new year's gift, when she was twelve years old, from Mr. Malvern, and he would sit by the hour to hear her warble forth the music of Jackson of Exeter, who was her master.

In the most placid and happy manner did the family at the rectory pass their time, while Augusta, improving each hour, her various talents, was the idol of the party.

When our heroine arrived at the age of fifteen, and all means that had been used to discover from what family she originated had proved fruitless, Mr.

Monckley thought it incumbent on himself to make her acquainted with the melancholy circumstance which had thrown her on the protection of strangers ; for, till that period she had no suspicion, but that she was nearly related to him, though depending on his bounty. With the most affectionate tenderness he prefaced his disclosure, and with reasoning on the various ways that misfortune steals upon mortals, and the numerous blessings they may insure to themselves by a propriety of conduct, he led to the painful story of her early deprivation of all her family ; he had seated her on a rock, which over-looked the Beach, where he had first discovered her. No words can describe the various effects his relation produced in the poor Augusta ! Every tender passion was called forth in her agitated bosom.

“ What all—all lost ! Father—mother—lost ! Oh ! why did I survive ? Why did I ever live to receive such cruel information, that I stand alone in the world, without any one being able to say, I am thy natural ptotector ? ”

Mr. Monckley folded the weeping girl in his arms, and gave her the strongest assurances of his love, and even more than paternal protection. “ You are the Child of Providence,” cried he, “ delivered to my care by that Being who formed you. Thus have I—thus will I—ever cherish you. You hitherto have never felt the want of a parent’s love : be assured, my dearest Augusta, you never shall. I would have spared you this bitter relation, had I not esteemed myself bound in honour to inform you of all I know, and the methods I have pursued to obtain some intelligence concerning your family. You have an

understanding above your years. We will, if you wish it, resume our inquiries. We will consult, when your agitated spirits are more composed, on what grounds we shall proceed. Oh! Augusta—beloved Augusta! you are so dear to me, that (I own my weakness) I believe I should break my heart if it should become necessary to part with you: but I would, my love, subdue myself, if your advantage could be attained by it.”

The gratitude of Augusta’s heart manifested itself in the most pleasing manner to her patron: but a kind of inherent pride, she could not but feel, (and which her goodness and affection for Mr. Monckley made her both suppress and condemn) rose in her mind, and made it revolt against the idea of being supported by strangers.—“Had I been but related to him, however distantly, by the ties of consanguinity, some shadow of comfort would have remained in my sad bosom: but to be alone in the world!—to lose all!”—Oh! how bitter and poignant were the tears which followed that reflection.

“Never, never,” sighed she to herself, “shall I now experience one hour of joy or happiness! the source is poisoned, and all the waters of this cruel ocean cannot wash away the remembrance of my griefs!—Oh! my parents! my parents!” cried she, in a transport of agony, which, even the respect she bore to the tears of Mr. Monckley, could not then restrain.—“Oh! my lost parents, look down on the forlorn Augusta—Augusta! Alas! ye know her not by that name. Oh! then look down on the most wretched of children, and behold your own offspring!”

Her air was so wild, so full of distraction, that the

good Mr. Monckley found it necessary to exert a gentle authority to draw her from her situation, and lead her home, using the most pious and sensible arguments to calm her mind, and overcome her unavailing lamentation. Her sorrow subsided to appearance, but had sunk so deep in her bosom, as to overthrow the vivacity she used to be distinguished for.—Her conversation continually turned on the dreadful shipwreck ; it was never absent from her mind. Her reflections upon it tarnished every comfort she had for fifteen years enjoyed ; and never did Mr. Monckley repent any circumstance of his life so much, as having made the fatal, but necessary disclosure.

Mrs. Rachael had always opposed it, and now gathered fresh laurels on her prophecy, as she called it, that no good ever came of telling people that which would make them unhappy.—“ I knew it would be so,” continued she, in support of her position : “ Ignorance is not such an evil as scholars think it, and do we not read in the Royal Psalmist, ‘ that an increase of wisdom is an increase of sorrow ? ’ Can we have a better example than his assertion ? Or can we have a stronger proof of its truth than in our poor dear Augusta ? How playful and cheerful was she this morning, frisking about the garden like a butterfly. Yes, the case is plain as the nose in my face. Now she will be always thinking how grand she might have lived, had she been in her own father’s house.”

“ Oh ! my dearest Madam,” said the weeping Augusta, “ you mistake the source of my affliction. It is not for grandeur my tears flow from my bursting heart : I should not care, however low my parents.”

“Nay, I will be sworn they were not low,” cried Rachael, interrupting her : “No, no, such linen would not have been put on a child of mean parents, and, most likely, not your best neither. They hardly would have put on your christening suit on ship board.”

If the sound and pious exhortations of Mr. Monckley had not force to calm the conflicting tempest in the bosom of Augusta, it was not likely Mrs. Rachael’s jargon should have that effect. To put an end to it, Augusta rose, and kissing them both with respectful tenderness, begged leave to retire to her own chamber. Mr. Monckley went to take a pensive walk, and Rachael was left to her own reflections, or to whatever else seemed pleasing in her eyes. Those of Augusta, when they met her’s at dinner, shewed, by their swollen langour, how she had employed her time during her seclusion from the family. In compliance with their repeated tender intreaties, she tried to swallow a little food ; but the effort brought fresh tears into her eyes, and their kindness and affectionate behaviour, although she had ever been accustomed to them, now made them stream down her pallid cheek.

She begged to see the relics, which were all the property she had in the world. Mrs. Rachael opposed it from the tenderest, but most mistaken motives. From the same tenderness Mr. Monckley would have her indulged. He knew human nature better : he knew grief was more violent at first from being soothed and indulged ; but that, that very violence would soonest destroy it. He ordered every remaining vestige of the wreck, which consisted of the articles of the child’s and woman’s clothes, with the cradle and furniture, and the Roman Catholic insignia, to be brought into

the parlour, and particularly from the last mentioned, he deduced strong arguments for the advantages which would ultimately result to her, in having escaped the errors of Papacy. He had, from her tenderest years, fully made her acquainted with the nature and beauty, as well as the tenets of the Protestant religion, together with its decided preference over that of the Catholic, that she might thoroughly know the faith that was in her : and, indeed, here Mrs. Rachael had done her part too ; for the first book she had put into her hand, was Fox's Martyrs, and she used to make her copy, with her pencil, the dreadful pictures of poor persecuted Protestants at the stake, in the reign of bloody queen Mary, an epithet, which she never mentioned that wretched bigot without.

The abhorrence of so pernicious and erroneous a system of religion, had been so early implanted in her bosom, as to make her shudder at the idea of her parents having been of that persuasion ; and this idea would have increased her grief, had it not been counteracted by her firm belief, that a merciful God would behold, with an eye of pity, those who offended from any principles inculcated at an early age, growing with their growth, and strengthening with their strength.

Augusta was rational, and no bigot. Mr. Monckley was rational, but he was strongly tinctured with bigotry ; for certainly there are bigots to all systems. Poor Rachael was very little of the first, and as much a bigot to the Protestant cause, though happily without the power of persecution, as ever bloody queen Mary was to the Catholic. She had rejoiced in the riot which had happened about six years before the

period we are now come to, and never omitted drinking the health of Lord George Gordon, as the staunch friend of Protestantism, and constantly asserted, that, had it not been for him, the Catholics would have seized on the kingdom, and burnt every Protestant at the stake. Such was her enthusiasm, that she had actually put herself into mourning for the wretches who had been killed and executed for their violent depredations on the peace and property of the inhabitants of London, and, what is more, sacrificed her favorite pink ribbands for true blue, as she called it.

Augusta examined every article with a kind of pious horror. Her eyes were dimmed with tears. It seemed as if the source from whence they flowed was inexhaustible. She intreated she might have the things removed into her own closet. "Oh! sacred remains of my shipwrecked parents! Is this all I have to remember ye by? Alas! how might you have smiled on your helpless infant, when she was thus arrayed! So soon, so fatally, to be deprived of your love and watchful care! Why, why, my beloved mother, my too cautious father, why did you envelope this cradle in the protecting sail? Why did I not share your fate? Too happy had I been!" These were the melancholy reflections of Augusta, as she conveyed all her treasure into a light closet, within her own room. Her life hitherto had been one continued scene of sunshine, without a cloud of sorrow or discontent, she improving her capacious mind with every useful and elegant accomplishment; the dawning day had awakened her to happiness, and her downy pillow had received her each night, with a heart devoid of care, sinking into a peaceful slumber;

but now the passing hours found her restless, and her bosom torn with anguish; peace had fled from her, and taken balmy sleep from her weary eyes.

For the first time she proved, that the somniferous God

“ Lights on lids unsullied with a tear.”

The next morning came, and found Augusta pale and dejected. Her kind and tender friends were apprehensive of her being ill.—“ I am only sick at heart,” said she, the tears, she tried to suppress, trembling in her eyes; “ but I shall be better. Yes, my dear, my benevolent protectors, I will be better ;” and from that moment, such was the command the charming girl asserted over her painful feelings, that she ceased to breathe a mournful sentence before them: but often would she steal away to the beach, and pour forth her artless and pious sorrow to the winds and the waves. Hours did she pass in her closet, viewing and weeping over her treasure. Mr. Monckley saw with concern her studies were neglected, and saw too the painful efforts she made to stifle her grief while in their presence; when she urged him to shew her the brass plate he had put up in the church, he took occasion, as they were going thither, to speak with energy on the absolute necessity, both in a religious and moral sense, of allowing our reason to combat irremediable calamities, and not feed upon our fruitless sorrow till it corroded all our comforts.

“ Alas ! my dear Sir,” said Augusta, with a conscious blush, for having been mistaken, in supposing

she had deceived him, "I have done all I can to overcome this severe and heavy trial. You have not heard me complain. I hope I am equally sensible and grateful for your unremitted kindness to a poor orphan. I have nothing but my tears to give to my lost parents ; but they are shed in secret, without offending any one by obtrusive sorrow."

"My sweetest child," said he, tenderly pressing her hand to his lips, and dropping a paternal tear on it, "it is your secret grief that is most to be dreaded and guarded against ; give vent then to the feelings of your heart while I am with you, to sooth and soften them as much as I have power." Seeing her gushing tears, which seemed only to wait for permission to flow, bedewing her lovely face, he seated her on a green bank, and suffered her freely to indulge that luxury to a wounded heart. He tenderly threw his arms round her, and joined in weeping with her, the misfortunes for which there was no present cure. She felt herself more relieved than she ever had from any flood of tears that had fallen from her eyes, since the day which had brought her acquainted with the cause for them. She thanked him in the most grateful terms for easing her heart of such a weight, and, being composed, they proceeded to the church. A trembling horror seized her on reflecting how often, with unheeding steps, she had walked over the sacred deposit of all, save herself, that remained of the shipwrecked company. "Alas ! no solemn rites were pronounced over my dear parents," said she ; "no bell announced the funeral obsequies ; but ye shall be enshrined in my bosom, and embalmed in my heart."

Mr. Monckley was forced to read the inscription to her, which he had caused to be engraved on a brass tablet. In the language of Shakespeare, had each word been a sun, she could not have seen them through the medium of her tears. The engraving ran thus :—

Near this spot
Lie the remains
Of an unfortunate WOMAN,
The victim of a dreadful storm,
September 22, 1770 :
Her body was the only one which
Floated on shore ;
The whole ship's company being lost,
In view of
Many spectators, without the power
Of affording them any assistance.
By miraculous Providence,
A CHILD in a cradle,
Was most providentially preserved !
And brought up
By the REVEREND H. MONCKLEY,
Rector of this parish,
And baptized by the names of
AUGUSTA MONCKLEY.

Augusta seemed now disposed to return. She started when she found her companion led the way to the beach.—“ Ah ! my dear Sir,” said she, “ whither are you going ?”

“ You have been by the sea-side often, Augusta ; have you not, since I accompanied you ?”

“ I own I have many times ; nor would I have concealed my frequent visits, only that I feared to give you pain.”

“ I wish to familiarize it to you, my love ; we will now go thither. This life, my beloved Augusta, was intended for a state of trial, to fit us for the life to come. If we could have our wishes, we vainly think we should be happy ; but our heavenly Father knoweth otherwise. He knoweth from the accomplishment of the desires of our foolish hearts, that we should commonly form our greatest misery on earth, and lose our portion of bliss in the world to come. What are all the riches of the Universe compared to the salvation of our souls ? You, my darling, bending your weeping eye over the waves that intombed your parents, think there is not so wretched a being as yourself.” A deep sigh from Augusta, shewed how earnestly she subscribed to that opinion.—“ But in viewing our misfortunes,” continued he, “ we should carefully examine both sides, and weigh the good with the evil. Let me take a retrospect of your fate, by which you may learn to judge of others. In the age of the earliest infancy, you have lost your parents. Yours, indeed, by a most calamitous and very uncommon mischance, though not singular. Hundreds, thousands, may have lost their parents by the same, or a somewhat similar fate ; rigorous fortune might have cast you on a coast of savages, where the name of our blessed Saviour was never mentioned but in derision : even on many coasts in England you might have been stripped, and left on the sands to perish ; or, if that fate had not awaited you, you might have been con-

signed to a work-house, brought up in total ignorance of religion and morality, and fallen a victim to sordid vice, lived an abandoned wretch, and died, lost for ever!

“ Thus have I shewn you, my beloved child, the dark side of the picture : by gracious providence, I have been the happy means of fostering unprotected innocence. I have made you my own. I cannot place you in affluence, but I have stored your mind with the best resources in any situation in life ; and your education is such, as would give lustre to the highest. The pleasure I have taken in instructing you, has only been equal to the avidity, with which you have hitherto received it. You have frequently, with the ardour of affliction, called on your parents to look down on you. Trust me, my Augusta, if, from their ineffable state of bliss, it is allowed them to behold such dust and clay as we are, they must rejoice in such a daughter as they would view in you. You have had good seeds sown into you, and the rich native soil has done all honour to the culture bestowed upon it : but think, my love, would it afford pleasure and satisfaction to your parents, to see this noble expected harvest torn up by the roots, or choaked with weeds ? Your education is in the zenith, but not complete. You neglect your improvements ; you reject your food, and, by your pale haggard looks, you suffer not yourself to take your nightly repose. I mean not to speak harshly to you, my love. I know too well what a ready answer the afflicted heart hath to him who attempts to comfort it. I, my Augusta, have been worn to the bone with sorrow. You grieve

for having lost parents, which, happily, you have never felt the want of. I have, and shall ever deplore, a tender wife, snatched from my arms, almost by as sudden an accident as that which pierces your bosom with grief. Deep rooted, and for ever fixed in my heart, is the loss which I sustained in the meridian of my days, when the mind expands, and sighs for that social enjoyment, which happy marriages can alone insure. Oh! Augusta, she was all that man could wish for in a companion. The world held not her counterpart. One soul, one mind, united us; but I have lost her! Your consolations may be restored. Time will pour a balm into your wounded spirit; but mine is broken, never to be healed in this world." His voice faltered—his whole frame shook with restrained agony—Augusta seized his hand—and, throwing herself on her knees—"Oh! my revered protector—my more than father!" cried she: "and have such unmerited sufferings been thine? Who then has a right to complain in your presence? Pardon your child, who appears in her own eyes but a worm in the dust. I submit to you in all things. I will be thankful to that Being who has extended such mercies to me.—Oh! unhappy me, that ever I should have added to your distresses! Never shall you again shed a tear for your Augusta. She does, she will, rejoice in the unfading comforts your goodness has bestowed, and your pious work shall be accomplished in her. Oh! my beloved parent, dearer to me than all the world, will it be any relief to your overcharged heart to vent its complainings to your child? The indulgence you so lately afforded me

removed an inexpressible weight. If a participation can alleviate yours, gladly will I share them. Oh !

——“ More than share them,—

“ Give me all thy griefs.”

“ Sweet angel !” said Mr. Monckley, bending over her with looks of the most cordial love ; “ Sweet comforter ! your assurances of combating this severe trial at your early years, will be the utmost consolation I can receive. Yes, I will draw the picture of the most charming and best of women : “ but now,” continued he, “ it grows late ; my sister will wait dinner for us.—Come, sweet comforter of an old man’s sorrows, let us mutually assist each other in softening the irremediable losses we have each sustained.” He drew her arm through his, and sought from every object they viewed, to deduce some pleasing reflections, to calm her spirits, and raise them to a placid cheerfulness.

CHAP. VII.

IN the evening Augusta was half tempted to remind Mr. Monckley of his promise ; but properly judging she ought to wait his own time, and afford him some instance that his lessons had not been lost upon an insensible and ungrateful girl, with an assumed alacrity,

she asked him, if he should like to hear her practise her sonata on the piano-forte? Nothing of this kind was ever lost on Mr. Monckley.—“It would give me the highest pleasure,” answered he, in a tone that shewed the emotion of his heart, “excellent Augusta!” he added, leading her to the instrument, “thou art all the fondest father can wish thee!” A conscious glow sat on her features, and she sat down, and played with so much execution and spirit, as evinced to her kind benefactor, that she was determined to dissipate that moody melancholy, which had for some days oppressed her.

“Oh! I am so glad to see you so merry again, my dear Augusta,” said Rachael, “I thought I was never to hear you play the music any more, or see your nimble fingers employed with a needle, or your fancy drawing pretty pictures.”

“I have been too negligent, indeed, my dear Madam, of late; but you shall have no cause for finding fault with me in future.”

“I find fault? Nay, I’ll be judged by my brother, did I ever find fault with Augusta? No; I am sure. I rather was inclined to find fault with him, for telling you a long rig-ma-role story of what is past, and better forgotten than talked about, to set folks a crying till their eyes are swelled out of their heads. ‘Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof:’ I say, we need not be raking and rummaging among dust and ashes for misfortunes to cry for, they will start out of the ground, as I may say, fast enough for patience to bear them. There’s our red cow has lost her calf, and I am disappointed too by the partridge hen forsaking the duck eggs, they will be all lost, and we

shall be short of cream and butter from this mistake, or accident. Oh ! I'll be hanged before I will go almost a score of years back, to grieve for things that are as common as the day in the week. Some die this way, and some die that : but a peaceable heart, and a good conscience, carry all fair within, and the rest we must bear with Christian temper." Mrs. Rachael had got upon a high rope, and nothing seemed possible to stop her career : however, Augusta, seeing how much Mr. Monckley was hurt by her exposing her folly and ignorance at such a rate, went up to her, saying, as she took her hand, " I am thankful, my dear Madam, for the instruction you have given me : I enjoy many blessings, and, I hope, my grateful heart will never suffer me to forget the kindness of my benefactors. We will mutually lose sight of all our misfortunes. Come," she continued, with a gayer tone, " I will now play some of your favourite tunes. What song will you have ?" The harmony of her voice, which, soft and sweet in conversation, was peculiarly adapted to singing, soon soothed Mrs. Rachael into peace. Mr. Monckley, unwilling to fatigue his beloved Augusta, proposed, by way of respite, that he should take some favourite author to piece out the evening's entertainment. By varying the amusement, the end he sought for was obtained, stealing the mind from itself, and beguiling time of reflections that would, but for this little artifice, have obtruded on the heart of Augusta, and sunk her again into pensiveness.

That night, with more than common fervor, did the amiable girl offer up her petitions to heaven, and she was rewarded with a sweet composing sleep, that

restored the roses to her cheeks, and again the mildest radiance to her charming eyes. Mr. Monckley knew her mind had an uncommon greatness in it, with the strongest sense of propriety; therefore he did not restrain his earnest congratulations on the amendment of her looks. His praises were a pleasing acknowledgment to her grateful heart, and induced her to persevere in a course of conduct that so evidently made him happy, and ultimately would bring peace to her own bosom. Not that with her, as with many of her age, it would have been

“The tear forgot as soon as shed.”

The reflections which had sprung up in her mind, from the fate of her parents, as they had enlarged her sensibility, had expanded her reason. She viewed every thing in a different light from what it had appeared in the playful fancy of childhood. It seemed as if the beautiful bud had burst suddenly into its lovely maturity. Her mind was softer, yet stronger, as the tints of the new blown rose, wear a tenderer hue than the bud, tho' the sweets are increased. The little disappointments, and idle follies of infantile weakness were laid aside, and thought of no more. A new soul seemed breathed into her, which gathered fresh beauty and powers each moment. Partial as Mr. Monckley had ever been to this child of his adoption, he now regarded her as something greatly superior to his fondest hopes. Her judgment was sound, and she expressed all her sentiments with precision, attended with a soft humility, as if doubting her own strength.

She resumed all her various avocations with redoubled attention. Works of elegance and taste were her delight; but, in compliance with the first wish of Mrs. Rachael, which was to make her a complete housewife, she accompanied that good woman in inspecting the domestic affairs of the family, and could make a shirt and a shift, a pudding or a pie, the *summum bonum* of female learning, according to Rachael's fixed principles, as well as any young lady in the county of Devon; "and need not be ashamed, or turn her back on any of them," as Mrs. Rachael, with a smile, assured her. It must be confessed, that when once Augusta had proved her excellence in these essential endowments, she remained very well satisfied with the praise she received, and adopted one of Mrs. Rachael's maxims, "That what was once well done was twice done;" "and to know how to do a thing well once, was the same as being kept in constant exercise of doing it;" and Mr. Monckley declared it as his opinion, that she could never improve more in the mystery of mixing a pudding, and that, to know how such things were compounded, was all the art necessary for a gentlewoman. Mrs. Rachael made some little remonstrances, such as, "that kind of knowledge was more useful to women, or even gentlewomen, than learning a parcel of jargon, which few could understand, and fewer be the better for——:" but Augusta obtained a triumph, and exemption from the culinary arts, by proposing to finish a gown, which Rachael had been the last twenty years in flourishing, and which, by introducing some flowers of her own drawing, now promised to be tolerably pretty, and fit to be worn.

Yet, notwithstanding keeping her mind fully employed, Augusta had still vacant minutes to bestow in reflecting on the singularity of her fate, and often would she throw a breadth of the before-mentioned gown aside, and indulge a tear over her treasure, and in the various perplexing ideas it suggested to her, that one of its being possible, one time or other, to discover her origin and family, never left her imagination, however cheerful she appeared, or however engaged. From the fineness of the linen, and richness of the laces which trimmed it, she was fully persuaded her parents were above the common rank in life.—“Oh!” cried she, lifting up her eyes with pious gratitude, “how ought I to bless the hand of Providence for placing me in a state where I have received such advantages from education.” She then adverted to the idea which Mr. Monckley had suggested, what might have been her fate, had she been taken up on the Beach by some sordid penurious wretch, who would have thought he had acted a very Christian part, by having her admitted to, and bred up in a work-house.

A glow of pride, indignant pride, suffused her cheek, “that an infant thus dressed, and, no doubt, sprang from a rich, if not noble stock, should be sunk in obscurity and infamy!” The thought was too severe; her soul revolted at it.—“Oh! no,” cried she starting from the painful picture she was contemplating. “Blessed be Providence, a happier fortune awaits me; and the almost miracle that saved me, gives me a sweet foretaste that my prayers will be heard. Oh! yes,” she continued, rising, and with an energetic fervour, embracing the cradle, “yes, I shall one day,

(and I will patiently and humbly wait for the time which seemeth best to my heavenly Protector,) one day I shall, most assuredly, learn how, and by whom, I was placed here."

She had warmed herself almost to a pitch of enthusiasm, by the thoughts which possessed her whole soul; but, in the midst of her apostrophizing, she was brought down to the earth, much beyond which her imagination had soared, by hearing the voice of Mr. Monckley, calling upon her to accompany him in an evening walk. Her high-raised cogitations threw a radiance on her countenance, that made it appear almost celestial. She had never looked so beautiful in her life. Mr. Monckley fixed his eyes on her with astonishment and delight. By her coming from her closet, he conjectured what had been her study, and he rejoiced to see such animation and heightened glow on her expressive features, instead of the pensive languor that had prevailed, when of late she had visited that repository of her stores.

"My love," cried the good old man, "shall we take the advantage of this charming afternoon? You seem in excellent order for exercise, for you look as if you trod in air."

"Oh! my dear Sir," returned Augusta, "I feel as if I had a new spirit breathed into me. My days were formerly happy, that is, void of care or thought; they passed by, as if the events were common, and amused without interesting me. Weeks and years thus passed unheeded from their uniformity; I was neither sensible of, or properly grateful for, the advantages I was hourly receiving; like the blessing of health, which is not prized while we are in posses-

sion of it. Thus was my soul ignorant of God, till it sickened with despair; and sick, my beloved patron, was the soul of your Augusta, even to the desire of dissolution. Heaven has opened my heart, and enlarged my understanding: I feel the happiness of my situation; I enjoy its comforts and advantages like the return of health, after a tedious and painful confinement. My spirits are light as the gossamer down, and satisfied to wait, well convinced, that when heaven sees proper, he will reveal me to myself, or withhold the information for the wisest purposes: but I do, I do feel the strongest assurances, that the first and only wish of my heart will be gratified!"

Mr. Monckley listened to her with pleasure; nor would he break down the barrier of hope she had raised to keep out melancholy ideas, though he himself had no hope the discovery, after such a period, could ever take place; but it had proved beneficial to the child of his affection, and he could not find in his heart to check her indulging it.

They pursued their way to their favourite spot, the rock on the Beach. It was a beautiful evening; the sun reflected its declining beams on the watery expanse, "kissing each wave." The air was soft and serene, and the gentle rushing of the billows made a pleasing murmur, which rather invited than interrupted attention. Here did Mr. Monckley place Augusta, taking his seat by her side: "and now, my love," said he, "I will enter into a detail of the sufferings I have endured."

"Alas! Sir," replied Augusta, "will not the relation revive the distress too keenly? I repent of the promise I exacted. You will be too much affected."

“ No, my best love,” he answered, “ it is pleasing and soothing to my heart ; and think you, my Augusta, that I have not profited by your sweet example ? Yes, I have taken myself to task, and this consolation results from my severe examination, that I cannot have many years to live, and then our re-union, though not more perfect or happy, will be more permanent.” He then began the little history of himself, as the reader will find in the next chapter.

CHAP. VIII.

DOMESTIC LIFE.

“ My father possessed a small patrimony of near two hundred a-year, which he farmed himself, (and which I now have let to my brother) together with other lands lying contiguous to it, in the county of Leicester. He was a plain, sensible man ; but from the penuriousness of his parents had had but little education. As Rachael frequently says, ‘ he was determined to have one scholar in his family,’ and therefore made no objection to the scheme of life which best suited my taste and inclination. I was sent at an early age to an excellent seminary at Rugby, where I continued till my education was sufficiently in train, to be entered a student at Caius College, Cambridge. The different mode in which

I had been brought up, had separated me a great deal from my family, though they were not less dear to me on that account. To prevent my being burthensome to my father, I accepted of a tutorship as soon as I was qualified for such an undertaking, and in that situation I became acquainted with, and first loved, the only woman that ever possessed my heart. She was descended from a good family, but through the chicanery of a lawyer, who was her guardian, she had been deprived of most of her fortune, and separating herself from his power, had taken asylum with the gentleman whose son I had the care of, till she came of age, of which period she now wanted two years.

“The equanimity with which she had borne the reverse of fortune, and the gentleness, mingled with dignity, with which she met the contumely which patient merit of the unworthy takes, had raised my esteem for her character before I was personally acquainted with her ; but soon my admiration ripened into affection of the tenderest and purest kind ; and yet I knew not how much I loved her, till an accident, that had nearly been fatal to her life, convinced me that my whole soul was devoted to her ! Yet, what do I say ? Alas ! how much dearer did I love her afterwards, for

“ We were the happiest pair of human kind !

“ The rolling year its varying course perform'd,

“ And back return'd again.

“ Another and another smiling came,

“ And saw our happiness unchang'd remain,

“ Still in her golden chain.

“ Harmonious concord did our wishes bind ;

“ Our studies, pleasures, tastes, the same ;

“ O fatal, fatal stroke !
“ That on this pleasing fabric love had rais’d
“ Of rare felicity,
“ On which e’en wanton vice with envy gaz’d,
“ And ev’ry scheme of bliss our hearts had form’d
“ With soothing hope, for many a future day,
“ In one sad moment broke !”

Mr. Monckley became agitated. He started up, and hastily quitting Augusta, paced pensively some minutes along the Beach, smiting his bosom, and wiping away the fast trickling tears which anguish wrung from his memory-tortured breast. The soft eyes of Augusta distilled the sympathetic drops in a copious shower. Soon was her old friend sufficiently composed to pursue his story, and he resumed his seat, apologizing for his weakness, and promising to be more himself during his narration.

“ The mediocrity of my circumstances, and subaltern situation I held in my pupil’s family, kept my wishes and affections closely concealed in my own bosom. I thought no man could deserve such a woman as Matilda Barclay, and a first passion, I believe, always make us humble. To enjoy the pleasure of her society was my first and only happiness, and the fear of being deprived of it, the only evil I dreaded. Till she came of age I knew she would continue to live with her uncle, and all that time I was certain the bliss of daily beholding her would be mine. The poisoned arrow of adversity had then never touched my heart, or tinctured my cup with bitterness. I possessed a large share of good health and spirits, and seemed to fancy all the felicity of my

life was permanently fixed. I saw I was high in the esteem of Matilda, that she honored me with her friendship, and that delightful sentiment filled my bosom with the truest joy, as I knew it could never experience a change.

“One day, when the time of her minority was near its conclusion, I surprised Matilda in tears. With trembling anxiety I implored her to tell me her griefs. She strove to escape both me and my inquiry. “Make me not miserable,” cried I, in a tone of mournful earnestness: “Let me at least have the privilege of a friend in sharing, if I am denied lessening, your sorrow.”

“Indeed, Mr. Monckley, you can do neither: I beseech you to leave me; I am weak, foolish, and ungrateful.”—“Oh! not so,” I replied; “neither is Miss Barclay one or the other.”

“Alas! my friend,” she rejoined, shaking her head, “you will soon join in the rest of the family’s opinion, and yet they, nor you, know, or will ever know, the extent of my weakness and folly.”—“I join in an opinion which militates against the most amiable woman in the world!” repeated I, with vivacity; “No, I would die first.”—“Oh!” she answered, “how little do men know themselves! Believe me, Mr. Monckley, before this blessed roof of heaven is fretted with stars, you will join your arguments with those of my relations to urge me to make myself miserable for life.” Her voice faltered and trembled while she spoke. I was going to call all the host of the starry heavens to witness, that my tongue should never utter any wish, but for her everlasting happiness; when she broke from me, and

left me overwhelmed with the most perplexing thoughts that ever assailed the heart of man. I continued some time transfixed to the spot where she had left me : nor should I have awakened from my reverie, or rather stupor, had I not heard the last bell ring for dinner, and recollected that nothing displeased old Mr. Barclay so much, as not to see every one in his place when it was serving.

“At table I was surprised to see a stranger, whom Mr. Barclay introduced as his friend, Sir Thomas Walker, a very genteel looking man, of about five and thirty. As it was but seldom that much conversation passed in our meal times, I was not struck with the particular silence which now reigned, or the air of restraint which seemed to pervade every one. My ideas were full (and yet confused were they) of the distresses and tears of Matilda. Every movement seemed to give me a little relief. I longed most heartily to get from the table, and retire to meditate on I knew not what. Very soon after the desert made its appearance, the ladies of the family withdrew. I observed, as Matilda was passing Sir Thomas Walker's chair, he whispered something to her. She courtesied, and with visible confusion, and more vexation, answered : “I intreat you not to think so.” The mystery vanished in one moment. “This Baronet then has made her an offer, thought I; she is averse to the proposal, and I am to join the family to gain her consent to her misery ; sooner will I be stretched on the cold earth, or be buried alive !” I resumed my seat, my temples beating as if the arteries would burst. It was not my custom to take above one glass, or two at most, after the

ladies had left the party: I had swallowed them without knowing what had been the toasts, or one word of the conversation, and, rising, drew back my chair, and, bowing, was going to quit the room.

“Stop one moment, Sir,” said Sir Thomas, gently laying his hand on my sleeve, and turning to Mr. Barclay, continued, “Does this young gentleman know the purport of my visit here?” On being informed of my total ignorance, “Then I will beg the favour of you, my dear Sir, to give us the pleasure of your company, while I tell you, before Mr. Barclay, with the utmost candour, that I have avowed myself the admirer of that charming girl, Matilda!” It seemed a thunderbolt to my heart. I did not know whether he expected I should speak; I only knew that I was incapable of articulating a sentence. He mistook my inability for a sign of mute attention, and proceeded: “while Miss Barclay resided with that old scoundrel of a guardian, I had the honour of being well acquainted with her, and had the taste to distinguish her, although at so early an age as sixteen; but she was a fine grown girl, and as tall as she is now. I believe I was a little gay at that time, and, perhaps, not quite so correct in my advances as I should have been. Young fellows must have allowances made them, and there are few of them saints, as you must know, my sober-looking friend.” He took my concurrence for granted, as I still observed a profound silence. “She, perhaps, had heard that I had indulged my *penchant* for gallantry among some of the farmers’ daughters in the neighbourhood, as there happened to be some devilish fine girls of that descrip-

tion, who were as willing to be as wise as their mothers, as ever I could be to instruct them : but the reign of such conquerors is but short. Matikla was the goddess of my idolatry, and I found little difficulty in abandoning a sickening variety, for the pleasure of loving her alone. I could see she was pleased with the idea, so bewitching, and generally so fatal to young ladies, of having reformed a rake, for, to speak the truth, such had been too remarkably my character, and many were the sweet lessons the lovely charmer gave me on the beauty of virtue. I was quite as well satisfied that she should have the merit of converting me by her persuasive tongue, though I knew in my heart it was the brilliancy of her eyes that effected the purpose more fully. I begged she would now take the work of her own hands entirely to herself, that I might be in a fair way of arriving at her degree of perfection. On this kind of playing at making love, we continued till the old rascal played the devil with her fortune. I was not at that time in possession of my title and estate, both which devolved to me by the death of my uncle : however, I was in love confoundedly, so I pressed my suit with redoubled ardour. Out of an heroic piece of pride she damped my hopes, and since she has been here, I had not seen her, till a few evenings since at the Assembly. I felt my affections all returned, and I am now come hither to renew my addresses. I cannot boast like Cæsar, *veni, vidi, vici* ; but I shall not give over the chace now I am upon trial. Young people are apt to creep into one another's confidence. Will you tell me if you think there is any happy dog that has superseded me in her regards ?" On my honour I

assured him I had not ; but as a proof I was not honoured with Miss Barclay's confidence, I had never even heard his, Sir Thomas Walker's, name pass her lips. The melancholy air which accompanied my assertion, occasioned Mr. Barclay to exclaim, clapping me on the shoulder, " Why the devil, Mr. Parson, you look confounded conscious ; I hope you have no thoughts of Matilda ? You, at least, will not be a spoke in our wheel, will you ? "

" There is nothing nearer my heart than the welfare and happiness of—of all your family." I answered. " Why parsons have eyes as well as the laity," said Sir Thomas.

" True, Sir," said I, more briskly, " and I hope it is no breach of the clerical character to admire and revere virtue, even when it is in a lovely form."

" God forbid it should !" cried Sir Thomas : " but, pray, Sir, don't you think a man of my figure," throwing himself back in his seat, and displaying a *laced waistcoat* with an air, I thought, disgustfully parading ; but, indeed, who can look graceful in the eye of a rival ? " may expect some consideration from a girl of no fortune, or expectations ? "

" Yes, Sir," I answered ; " nor would I accept of a Princess, were I you, who did not distinguish me by her love from all mankind ! "

" Well said, my little lad of spirit," cried Sir Thomas. " By heaven, you shall have the best living that can be purchased, if you will stand my friend on this occasion."

" On this and no occasion will I stand any man's friend," I replied, " for all the wealth of the world, on a subject that should make another unhappy."

“ You do not speak this with reference to my affair with Matilda, I hope? I am convinced I shall make her happy, aye the happiest of women, I don't doubt; but the intreaties of friends to these high-soul'd ladies savours too much of constraint. Try then, my dear little doctor, what you can do. Tell her I adore her. I value not her loss of fortune any more than this drop of wine in my glass. Tell her my soul is devoted to her, and I have constantly kept in practice her charming lectures, and am as sober a fellow as any square cap at College. She shall be mistress of me, and my fortune; and now, my good friend, as you have my credentials, open your embassy as soon as you can, and d—n the man who flinches in a bumper to my success.” So saying, he shook my hand, filled my glass as well as his own, and swore, “ I was the honestest fellow that ever wore a rose in a hat, and, by his soul, he wished me a mitre.”

“ I retired from the table to my own room, in a state of mind bordering upon distraction. I threw myself gasping into a chair, and nature gave way at last, and I solaced myself with indulging a copious flood of tears. Reflection then, sober reflection, took the lead. All the advantages attendant on such an establishment for the amiable Matilda, rose to my imagination, and I suffered it to be joined by my reason, and even strengthened it by my affection for her. “ She honours me with her friendship,” I cried to myself. “ How can I prove myself deserving of so flattering distinction, if I do not all in my power to promote her interest and welfare? and what is it that prevents my doing so?—a base self-interested

wish, that I have never dared to breathe to myself. Yes, Sir Thomas, if I have influence—but stop, has she not said, I should join to persuade her to accept of misery? ah! my good God! how hard is my fate. I am bound to plead the cause of my rival. My rival! What would I, in the maddest moments of my life, seek to unite that angel to my poverty? O heaven, I thank you for that beam of light you have shed into my bosom. With such a man as Sir Thomas Walker, she may be happy—with such a wretch as me, she must be miserable!” Having gained this fancied conquest over myself, I thought it heroic to sacrifice my love and happiness, which never had had hopes to feed them, to her apparent advantage. I rose from my seat, and prepared to meet the ladies in the drawing-room. My eyes involuntarily strayed to Matilda. She was placed between her aunt and Sir Thomas, who was talking gaily to her. “Oh heaven,” thought I, “my interposition is unnecessary—see! he takes her hand. I shall only then be called upon to give my sanction, officially at the altar.” I felt oppressed, and the cold damps of death bedewed my temples. Happily I recovered, without my disorder becoming visible to any one. I would not turn my face to that place they occupied. “Have courage,” whispered I to myself, “and do not betray a secret, which at present is buried deep in the most retired corner of thy heart.” When the tea equipage was removed, “Monckley,” said Sir Thomas, in a low voice, “I will soon give you an opportunity of speaking to Matilda. Use all your eloquence, for it is to a divinity you are to offer your prayers—but remember you are only a proxy.”

Chance, more than design, placed me beside Matilda, as we were walking in a grove after tea. "You would not tell me," said I, with a trembling voice, "why you were so much agitated this morning, but Sir Thomas Walker was more explicit, and has engaged me to plead his cause." "And you have accepted of it," said she. "The advantages of such an alliance, the best of your friends must wish you," I replied.

"Oh, Mr. Monckley!" she rejoined, "did I not tell you, you would join against me?" and while she was speaking, she fixed her beautiful dark eyes on me with a keen look of reproach. I felt abashed. "But did I not say too," added she, "that you would unite with my friends to urge me to misery." Her voice softened as well as her look, while she uttered this last sentence.

"I hope and wish you happy from my soul," said I, "you mistake the means most sadly, when you would plead the cause of Sir Thomas. As a child, I foolishly thought I preferred him to those men I had seen, but I think otherwise. I will never marry him, or indeed any one. My purpose is fixed, and no power (so spare your rhetoric, good Mr. Monckley) shall ever make an alteration in my sentiments. Some women perhaps might, from the total overthrow of their fondest hope, seek a vain consolation in revenge, but it would recoil on myself, as it has upon them. No, I am content, like the wounded deer, to bear the shaft in my own bosom, uncomplaining, unpitied. My resolution is taken, my heart is fixed for life, but it is a secret that will die with me. As soon as I come of age, I shall retire on my small pittance, con-

tent, that if I am not happy, I shall yet have escaped the misery of uniting myself to one I cannot love." She appeared deeply agitated, but recovering her spirits, she added, "Now say if you are not answered? and ask yourself," continued she, as she hastily turned from me, "if you ought to have been the advocate of Sir Thomas?"

"Gracious heaven!" thought I, "what may I conjecture from this? Oh! peace my beating heart, do not thus bewilder thyself. Can I, can I, be dear to Matilda?" the whole night found me ruminating on her words, and the sentiments they gave rise to. I must shorten my story, yet with what pleasure do I dwell on scenes that led to all my happiness. Oh me!" continued he, with a deep sigh, "which led to all my misery and wretchedness!"

"Sir Thomas found he could not alter the fixed resolves of Matilda, and after a variety of persecutions, I was still a silent spectator of, he took his final leave of the Barclay family. Soon after this Matilda came of age; and yet I suffered her to depart without coming to any explanation, and indeed opportunities were wanting, for she seemed purposely to avoid all conversation with me: she went, and all my peace fled with her.

"My pupil was now at a time of life to require my services no longer. I retired to a curacy many miles from them, but could not do so, without once more trying to see Matilda. I sustained a most cruel disappointment; she was absent on a visit at some distance. I penned a few lines, expressive of my admiration of her character, and wishes for her happiness, but not a word of my passion. With pain did

I restrain myself, however, I thought I acted honourably, by confining the secret of my unhappy love within my own bosom, but it was nourished by my life's blood. About two years after this, I was presented to a living of an hundred a-year, from an unknown hand. Three years did I reside upon it, when by a strange accident I discovered, that I owed my good fortune to the generous Matilda. She had sunk half her income in an annuity on her life, and with the remainder, had purchased this living. Words cannot express my feelings on this occasion. I was going in all haste to throw myself at her feet, when Mr. Malvern, who had sometime been acquainted with me, came to my house, and named me for this rectory, of five hundred a-year. He urged me to accompany him hither immediately to take possession. What an additional joy was this to the rest, that rushed with sweet violence on my heart. I had reason to believe myself beloved by Matilda, and although I could not offer her affluence, I could ensure her happiness, by sharing an ample competency. Soon as I was inducted, I hastened to the loveliest and most charming of women. The most candid *eclaircissement* took place very soon. My Matilda was above affectation; her virtues were of the first class. As soon as my rectory could be got in order to receive its beloved mistress, Matilda blessed me with her hand. Oh what happy, happy days were ours! 'tis impossible to describe my felicity, how each year improved our happiness, and convinced me with an elegant writer,

“ How much the wife is dearer than the bride.”

“But the scene is over! fourteen years had we lived, which seemed but as one. The time approached for my Matilda’s again blessing me, as I thought, with an addition to my felicity. My sister Rachael, who had just then come to live with us, (my father being dead, and my brother not behaving kindly to her) with officious love, ran down hastily to me, who was putting up fervent prayers for my Matilda’s safety, and eagerly wished me joy of a daughter. I as eagerly enquired after the dearer mother, and begged to know when I might see her. In a few minutes, Martha ran into the room, pale and terrified. My prophetic fears told me her purpose. Oh my dearest Matilda was in the arms of death! I cannot proceed. Distraction seized me—for many weeks I knew no one. My child, my sister, all were strangers to me, and every thing indifferent. Grief does not kill—for I recovered this dreadful blow. Religion, with balm on her heavenly wings, bore up my heart, and kept it from quite fainting. I saw the double duty that now devolved upon me, and I hope I performed my hard task properly. Happy shall I be, when heaven thinks proper to give me rest.”

The tears of Augusta had accompanied Mr. Monckley’s during his little narrative. He pressed her hand with an affectionate smile, saying, “Your sensibility, my dear Augusta, has been too severely exercised lately. I will give it no more such trials. It would be injured, and the finer edges worn off by frequent repetitions. Sensibility is a charming sentiment, when properly regulated, but when carried to excess, it either renders the possessor the victim of passion, or destroys the finer feelings, by wearing them out

too soon. We will now pursue our walk, and tranquillize our too much agitated spirits. I will inform you of the present state of my affairs, and what I can, and will do, for the child of my adoption, is the same I should have done, had my poor little daughter survived her dear mother. I always fixed the portion of a daughter at two thousand pounds. I have made my will, and that sum will be your's at the age of twenty-one. My paternal estate, and the rest of my income, making a separate provision for my sister, will of course devolve to Henry. Of him, thank heaven, I entertain the fairest hopes. Should that heaven claim me, in him you will ever find the steadiest friend ; he will always be as your brother. His affection for you has ever been increasing."

"Does Henry know the history of your poor orphan?" asked Augusta. "Yes, my dear, he does. It is yet too early, even to think of any future establishment for you. Your own choice must direct you, perhaps, but it is a vain suggestion, and therefore I suppress it. Come, we will talk on other subjects."

"No, my beloved, honoured friend and father," cried Augusta, the gratitude of her heart glistening in her eyes, "no, I cannot drop this till I have made you my poor acknowledgments. Oh ! poor must they ever be. Shall I never have power to repay the thousand obligations I have received? Shall you never know whose child it is your bounty saved? Oh ! yes, gracious heaven will hear and answer my prayers. Yes, I shall one day be enabled to prove my duty and my love to my revered benefactor. Oh ! how boundless are my obligations ; my gratitude only can keep pace with them. Obligations too of so sweet a nature, as

to expand the heart with the most delightful feelings, not weighing it down with the sense that they are unreturnable."

"And have I not obligations to my darling too?" replied the good old man.—"Oh! yes, my Augusta, most assuredly I have. Your playful innocence in childhood, meliorated my sorrows, and the ripening harvest of maturity, gives me the heart-felt joy of being convinced, you will be an honour to your sex, and a blessing to the world. Is it no pleasure, or exercise of gratitude, that I have been the happy means of preserving such a child? so dear to my heart, so indulgent to my weakness, the solace of my days, and the comforter of my age! Pleasures which I never should have enjoyed but from your society. I love Henry with the utmost affection, but I should never have related to him the sorrows of my life. You alone have been made a partaker of them. Your sympathy has given ease to a breast long oppressed with grief. The vivacity of Henry would have ill accorded with the tenderness of my distresses: not but that he loves me, but that he is not in possession of those exquisite sensibilities that enter into the afflictions of another, making them for the time our own. There is a robustness of sentiment, as well as constitution. They whose hearts are soft and ductile, may sometimes feel the exquisite of pain; but they are recompensed also with a thousand pleasures, equally ardent, that common minds pass over without noticing. The view of the sea to these last is a mere expanse of water; the others, behold it as the great chain which connects, and brings together the whole world!"

“Ah, me!” cried Augusta, sighing, and turning her eyes upon it, “and separates the most tender connexions!” She spoke in a low voice, as if unwilling to interrupt her companion ; he knew her purpose, and therefore not noting her apostrophe, went on in his discourse. “The verdant hills, the waving woods, the variegated broken ground, to a sensible mind, discover endless beauties, all leading the thoughts to the great Creator, and filling them with gratitude and love, for his power, equally admirable in the formation of the most magnificent, as the minutest object. Sensibility pervades the whole mind of some, by which they discover charms unseen, unheard, by others, who possess it not. My sister Rachael is as good a creature as ever breathed. She adored her sister (as indeed she does you) but equally without seeing or knowing her super-excellencies ; as we adore the Divinity, without being able to comprehend the whole of his essence, or to bring our comparison more to the reason of our natures ; as the blind would admire the rich scent of a beautiful *parterre*, without being able to distinguish the various tints of colouring, distributed through the different tribes ; or as the deaf would attend to the elegant modulations and exquisite tones of a concerto of Handel’s.”

“But yet her goodness of heart, my dear Sir.”—
“I allow it, I see it. I love her to my soul. Nor would I to any one, save yourself, my dear, have said so much ; but your discernment is capable of so nice a discrimination, that you can pity her errors, whether of constitution or education, and love her for the good meaning qualities of her heart. I would not thus deliver my sentiments before Henry. He is apt, from

a too unrestrained vivacity, sometimes to be too hard on his aunt. I have often reproved him for it, when the native and still uncorrupted tenderness of his heart has never ceased to make his penitence and remorse even deeper than his philippics have been bitter." Thus beguiling the time with conversation, it was late before they arrived at the house: Supper was ready, and Mrs. Rachael was full of complaints, lest they should have staid till some green peas, the first that had been gathered, would have lost their colour by over boiling.

"Come, my love," said her brother, "let us have peace with our peas, and then we will have grace." If a pun is ever allowable, though we have given our opinions on that head before, it is when it can turn off that little sub-acid humour, which sometimes renders the sweetest feast too sour. Good humour was presently restored to the features of Mrs. Rachael. She loved this play on words, though she never, from inability it must be confessed, was guilty of a pun herself.

Part of her impatience to have them return, she told them after supper, was to shew them a letter she had received in their absence from her nephew Henry: it was to acquaint them, in compliance with his father's wish, and a good opportunity which offered, he had accepted of a tutorship to a young man of fortune and character in Norfolk. "Though," said he, "it will be advantageous to me, yet I feel most sensibly the drawback it will be on my pleasures. I might rather have said, my happiness, for I know none when divided from my dear home. Tell my beloved Augusta I shall still pursue my music, in the

sweet hope of accompanying her. I would too request her assiduity in that heavenly accomplishment, but that I know her wish to please my dear father is sufficient to make her all perfect in every thing."

Henry had already been some months from home, and now it would be a long time before he joined their party. Indeed, Mr. Monckley expressed a wish that he would employ his time to the improvement of his mind, till the age in which he would be able to take possession of the rectory, which could not be till he was twenty-four. Till nearly that period we shall suffer things to take their own course, as no incident arose to alter the dispositions or circumstances of the family, in which was placed our heroine: save, that Rachael one day, by accident, fed the flame of inquiry and anxiety in Augusta, concerning her extraction. She surprised her in her little closet, with her eyes fixed on her darling treasure, examining each part of her infant habiliments with the most scrutinizing exactness. "'Tis a sweet cap," said Rachael, looking on it; "but it was made for a boy."

"Oh, my God! then," cried Augusta, starting up, and clasping her hands with vehemence, "perhaps I have a brother! Oh! that I could press him in my arms!"

"Perhaps you have not," said Rachael, "for I will take my oath that cap had never been washed when I took it from your pretty little head. I rather think, as most people expect, and provide for a boy at first, that it was owing entirely to that circumstance you had a boy's cap, and that you was the first-born of the family."

"It must be so," cried Augusta, lifting up her

hand, as a person does in striving to convince themselves of the truth of some conjecture : " Yes, my dear Madam, you are right ; it is a proof incontestible to me, that my parents were persons of great fortune, and that a male heir was wished for."

" I have always thought so : I am convinced of it," answered Rachael. " Nothing shall ever make me believe but that you are some great lady. Heaven grant I may live to see you restored to your family !"

Augusta sat ruminating, more about her personal connexions just at that time, than to Rachael's effusions ; and answering her in a *distract* manner, put up the clothes in great order into the cradle, and placing that in a box which had been made to preserve it, and as carefully locking it, retired to the parlour, her wishes and hopes freshly renewed, and even strengthened by expectation.

CHAP. IX.

AN ADDITION TO THE PARTY.

Mr. Malvern had ever shewn such a regard for Augusta, that her good patron flattered himself she would receive some augmentation of fortune from him. He had, with all his oddities, been a most steady friend to Mr. Monckley on every occasion, and was continually making our heroine presents, exclusive of the fifty pounds, which he never failed to give

her at the commencement of each year, for the purpose of paying the masters retained for her education. Mrs. Rachael, who had the gift of seeing further than most other people, scrupled not to say, she was certain he meant to do great things for his "dear little Venus," as he would still most heathenishly call Augusta, to the great scandal of the pious Rachael. Augusta, however, thought not about the matter. She would have given up all the riches of the world for moderate competence, could she but have attained a knowledge of her family. This wish occupied all her sleeping, and almost all her waking ideas; but time stole away on swift wings, and no circumstance ever transpired to strengthen her hopes, yet would they never forsake her; nor could she form any plan for her future state of life, while involved in this mystery and doubt.

Henry Monckley returned. She saw the chaise at the door, and, with the eagerness of a sister to meet a beloved brother, whom she had not seen for more than two years, she flew down stairs with the utmost celerity to welcome him home. She was almost ready to fly into his arms, when she stopped short, amazed to see an air of surprise take possession of all his features!—"Do you not know me, Henry?" she asked with the sweetest tone of voice.

"Oh! yes; that voice, sweetly thrilling on my nerves, tells me, it is my loved Augusta," said he, pressing her in his arms: "but how improved! No, I recall the word. Such did my Augusta promise to be, even in her cradle."

"Oh, Henry!" replied she, with a sigh, as he led her into the parlour, "how much have I suffered

since I saw you, by having the history of that fatal cradle explained to me ! Till then I thought myself very nearly related to you."

"The nearest ties of blood could not make you dearer to me than you have been. Would to heaven you saw me with the eyes I behold you ; then would you bless the chance which from distant regions brought us to one happy spot—a spot, my Augusta, could make a Paradise to Henry."

The embraces and caresses of his father and aunt interrupted his farther conversation of the same tender nature with Augusta. His expressions were still ardent in her praise, and on her improvements, which Mr. Monckley, with the fondness of a parent, pointed out to Henry. She, all artless innocence, and loving him in no other degree than a sister, felt her spirits more elevated than usual on this pleasing addition to the family party. At his first request, she played and sung his favourite airs, while he hung over her in speechless rapture. Never had he in his life tasted such happiness. His soul doated upon her beauty, her sense, and every bewitching attraction she was mistress of, unconscious herself of possessing any. Love, ardent love, had taken deep root in his heart, and soon, as it is usual, hope, doubt, anxiety, and all the off-shoots, sprang up with it. His eyes were almost constantly fixed on her lovely face, which, lighted up with vivacity, was almost too dazzling to view steadily. Rachael had an hawk's eye at discovery, and she plainly saw how deeply her nephew was enamoured of Augusta. She saw, or fancied she saw, for fancy casts a mist over our eyes, that Augusta was almost equally attached to Henry. She could

not wonder at it, for she thought him the finest and most amiable young man in the world. Nor, indeed, here was the good lady much mistaken. His person was more than unexceptionable, tall, well made, a manly glow on his cheeks, roseate with health, his complexion clear brunette, his eyes dark, now sparkling with vivacity, or softened into tenderness, and in each expression perfectly charming!

“Oh!” cried she, “they were made for each other! Heaven certainly intended it from the beginning, that she should be cast an infant on our coast, to become the wife of Henry. Mr. Malvern calls her Venus for coming out of the sea: she is more, if it was not profane to say so, like an angel dropped out of the clouds! Yes, she was born for Henry—I am convinced of it, and I will do all in my power to promote the intention of heaven.”

She kept her word most strictly; for when with her nephew, she never talked of any thing but Augusta, and how fond she was of him. To Augusta, her conversation chiefly turned on Henry, but she had no doubts about her affections being placed, where she herself saw all perfection. So much do the beauty and amiable qualities of the opposite sex affect the human heart, though of relations. The fond attachment of Henry was not unnoticed by his father, and although it gave a secret pleasure to him, he was resolved to let the event of it take its own course, as he was strictly determined never to influence, much less dictate, the choice of Augusta. And she was yet young enough, being not quite eighteen, to have any matrimonial scheme proposed. Her spirits and mind were, when divested of the thoughts of her

origin, which she so regulated, as never to obtrude in company, of the most cheerful cast; yet solidly so. Her attentions to her friends uniform and equal. She made little distinction between Henry and his father, as to visible preference, she loved them both as a parent and a brother. His fondness for her was most conspicuously different. His heart bounded with transport at her approach, and almost forgot to vibrate in her absence. He seemed to live but in her smiles, and the sweetness of her disposition tending to make every body happy, rendered his life extremely pleasing, as she was always in the temper to oblige those, who had shewn her such affection from her earliest childhood: Thus far his mind was easy, he could have no competitor for her favour. There was not a being in the parish, Mr. Malvern excepted, who had the least claim to the rank of gentleman, either from birth or education, therefore he had no previous impression to combat, and the sweet and affectionate manner with which she received all his attentions, fed his hopes that he was dear to her, though she did not discover the effects of a tender love with that vivacity which he felt he could not suppress; but he attributed her calm tranquillity to a heart perfectly at ease, and convinced of, and satisfied with, his affection. If she discovered not that tumult of joy which would flash in his eyes on meeting her, he placed that to the account of the difference of their education and constitutions. He was all fire and animation, she all delicacy and softness; yet still the flatterer, hope, led him on to believe, her tenderness would heighten into rapture, and construed every circumstance that could

feed and improve his attachment, to that point his wishes aimed at.

The arrangement after a few months was made for Henry's receiving the possession of the rectory, by the resignation of his father. In a family of so much love as this, it mattered but little from whose purse the supplies for exigencies came. There seemed but one will between them, the delight of obliging each other.

Mr. Malvern gave an elegant entertainment to the good folks at the rectory on the occasion, and presented Henry with notes to the amount of five hundred pounds, to set him off with; adding, at the same time, "I am an old man, that cannot expect to live long. I love you, and your father, and my sweet little Venus, better than any body in the world. I will not, however, leave my good aunt Rachael out of my list of friends (for I have a great regard for her, notwithstanding we sometimes fall out.) I should wish to live to see this dear boy and girl more closely united than they are at present. They seem formed for one another's happiness, and it would be my delight to make them a nuptial gift." The faces of both Henry and Augusta, were crimsoned over with blushes. His, indeed, heightened by joy, though a little chastened by the abruptness of the old man's wish, and the abashed countenance of his lovely Augusta. He could not, however, restrain himself from taking her hand as he sat by her, and raising it to his lips, said, "Oh that my beloved Augusta felt the same rapture, which even the wish of Mr. Malvern gives to my heart!" "Why you young fool," cried the old man, "what have you been at College so long for, if you

cannot translate looks and blushes!" Augusta was too much agitated to attempt a translation of them herself. Her mind was confused, yet, though she blamed the unguarded precipitancy of Mr. Malvern, she yet could not be angry seriously, because she knew his intention was good; nor could he know her inward resolution of never marrying, 'till she had clearly proved her origin. The perturbation of her spirits even took away her sense of propriety, for she still observed a profound silence. Mr. Monckley rising, and going round the table to her, said in a gentle voice, "Had you not better walk in the air, my love? You look distressed. Mr. Malvern was too abrupt with you. He felt not the delicacy of your situation. Nothing in this life could equal my joy, in calling you, in truth, my daughter; but, although I freely own, it has ever been from your infancy the first wish of my heart, I cautiously guarded it in my own bosom; nor would I suffer it to expand, lest I should be induced in the lightest manner to influence your choice; but your colour changes. Do, my sweet girl, take a walk in the garden; my sister will accompany you."

"And will not you, my beloved benefactor?" asked Augusta. The word father, which she generally addressed him by, now would not present itself to her lips. He would gladly have complied with her request, but Mr. Malvern would not permit it. Henry rose in some agitation, offering her his arm, for she visibly trembled.

"No, you must not leave the table," said she, faintly. "My dear Mrs. Monckley, will you lend me yours?"

"Yes, my sweet niece, most willingly I will attend

you. Oh! this is the happiest day of my life." Henry's eyes tenderly followed her, and yet a sigh stole from his heart. Augusta felt a little relieved, for Mrs. Rachael talked of nothing but the felicity it would be to her to see her union with Henry completed, complimenting her own sagacity in having long seen their mutual attachment. Too much oppressed, and yet she knew not why, to attend to the effusions of Mrs. Rachael's fancy, and precluded from arranging her various thoughts by her continual chatting, she pleaded fatigue, and went to the drawing-room; there she found a book, and taking it up, as she was prevented from thinking, she thought it the better way to drive ideas of her own from her head, and proposed reading aloud to Mrs. Rachael till the gentlemen had done with their wine. This had a remote good in it, which she had not foreseen; for Mrs. Rachael was soon lulled into a sound sleep on the sofa where they were seated.—The purpose of silencing her companion being obtained, Augusta threw her book away, the contents of which, having read with a divided attention, she did not clearly understand.—“Married to Henry Monckley!” she repeated softly to herself. “I become the wife of Henry! I thought he loved me as an affectionate brother would love a sister who was not unamiable. The regard I bore to him was of the same completion; but to marry him—to be his wife! And why not? What have I to offer in support of my repugnance? If repugnant I ought to be, to the first wish of my beloved patron's heart. Have I not fondly, anxiously wished to repay him some of the numerous obligations I owe him; and has he not said, ‘It would be

his highest joy to call me truly his daughter ?” And is not Henry amiable ? Have I seen, is it likely I should ever see a man more amiable ? But I loved him like a brother, and something whispers to my heart, that husbands are loved differently. And when he is—my—husband,” said she, sighing, “I may find I love him better than all the world. At present, my dear Mr. Monckley is much dearer to me. All that I can conceive of perfection I think he possesses. Henry, with all his good qualities, is too violent ; but that proceeds from his love. Mrs. Rachael says, I know not how to decide. My wish is to continue single : but if that wish interferes with those who have so good a right to regulate mine, it must, it shall sink before theirs. I am weary of thinking about it.” So saying, she left Mrs. Rachael snoring most comfortably, and repaired to the music parlour, and on the harpsichord soothed her agitated mind by playing some of Haydn’s lessons.

The sounds she drew from the instrument soon brought Henry into the room. A tremor which seized her urged her still to play on, though evidently without correctness.—“I hope, my dear Augusta,” said Henry, placing himself by her, “my visit is not so much out of time as your music is just now. Come, play no more : you have not yet recovered the agitation after dinner which Mr. Malvern threw you into : but may I not flatter myself, my gentle love, that I have made some impressions on a heart so dear to mine ?”

“You must tax me with the basest ingratitude before you can harbour a doubt of my feeling an affection for a family to whom I owe every thing, and

surely I owe a great deal to Henry likewise." Henry was very little flattered either by the sentiment or the cool expression.—"To love like me," said he, taking her hand, "must require the object to be as amiable and lovely as yourself, and I know my own inferiority: but yet, my sweet Augusta, how infinitely short of the affection I wish to inspire you with, is that with which you with so chilling a *sans-froid* unite me and my family. Not with this coldness did you look on your Henry this morning, when, with the most delightful and glowing tenderness, you congratulated me on this accession of fortune, 'unimbittered by the regret which would have seized my heart, had I succeeded to it by the death of my beloved father.' Such were the words of my angel. The smile, the kiss, which accompanied it—oh! how endearing to my soul."

"It was the tenderness of a sister to an amiable brother. In that light, from my earliest infancy, till, within these two hours, I ever saw, and ever loved Mr. Monckley."

"Mr. Monckley! Mr. Monckley!" starting up with the most visible chagrin and disorder pictured in his countenance—"Why, Mr. Monckley!—Oh! Augusta, do I deserve such return for my years of tenderness and adoration?"

"Dear Henry," said the trembling Augusta, the tears starting into her eyes, as she extended her hand to him, "did you not but now blame Mr. Malvern's precipitancy, and are you not guilty of the same? Is it the property of love to make the object unhappy? Is it flattering to the power you have over me to see me in tears?"

"Oh! what has my rash folly done?" cried he, throwing himself on his knees before her, and taking her hands in his. "My beloved Augusta, can you, and will you not forgive my violence? You know not how deep is my remorse and detestation of myself! Say you will pardon me, Augusta, or I am the veriest wretch that ever existed."

"Rise, for heaven's sake! Pray, Mr. Monckley, dear Henry!" for he had thrown his head upon her lap, and actually sobbed, from the vehemence of his agitation, "for mercy's sake, my dearest Henry, do not thus distress me; I am, I will be every thing you wish me, if you will change your position, and behave rationally."

"And will you be mine?" exclaimed Henry, folding his arms round her waist, as he still knelt before her.—"Does my heavenly Augusta say she will be mine? Oh! take my heart, so long your's, and mould it to the form most pleasing to yourself."

"I will retract every promise," answered she, smiling on him, "unless you rise, and seat yourself calmly by me."

"You shall be obeyed. Oh! my lovely girl, could I but be assured you preferred me to all my sex, who in all the world but the happy Henry would be an object of envy?"

"The distinction," said she, with a gayer air, "must be very flattering indeed, considering how large my acquaintance with the sex is. It must be a matter of great exultation to be preferred to young farmer Hodson, or James Burroughs, or Mr. Barker, or the spruce cropped curate of the next parish. I think I have enumerated all the men of whose per-

sons I have any knowledge. Are you satisfied, Henry, with the list ?”

“Oh! my love,” cried he, “how sweetly you reprove me! Your lesson shall not be lost upon your pupil; but you must consent to take some tender ones from me. I must teach you the soft lesson, love,” continued he, putting his arm round her, and drawing her towards him, at the same time pressing his lips to her cheek.

“Oh! enough for the present, good Henry,” said she, repulsing him, but with gentleness, for fear of again throwing him into a passion. “I will now give you a lesson from this most delightful composer: if you can accompany me, do—if not, sit still, and attend.” He preferred the latter, as it gave him the opportunity of fixing his eyes on her lovely face and form—which none could hardly equal in the world, much less to a man who adored like Henry.

Before she had quite finished, they received a summons to partake of coffee, &c. The rest of the time passed off very well, and early in the evening they took their leave of their friendly host. Henry mounted his horse, and escorted the chaise in which was his father and the ladies. Mr. Monckley, in the gentlest and most affectionate manner, renewed the conversation of the dinner. “My beloved child,” said he, “I felt exceedingly for you, at being so suddenly attacked by our good old friend; but I hope, by the sweet serenity of your countenance since, that all unpleasant sensations are done away from your mind. Mr. Malvern has little idea of the delicacy of so young and pure a heart as your’s. Oh! my darling, could that heart make Henry its free choice, all

my wishes would be accomplished ! And yet I fear to say so much to so duteous, so affectionate a child as you have been to me, lest you should misconceive my meaning, and hold yourself bound to obey me ; when, believe me, Augusta, I would be the first to support you in your indubitable claim of making your own election."

"My dearest, my ever honoured friend," cried she, "where could I make so sure an election to secure my own happiness, as by that measure which, you kindly say, would accomplish your wishes ? The attack, indeed, was not more sudden than unexpected. I had formed a vain resolution to myself, and I own felt deeply disappointed at its being in one moment overthrown. In my very singular situation, a stranger to myself, I wished never to have entered into any connexion which could not receive the sanction of my family—a family, the hope of one day discovering which, is an idea that I cherished as my life. Happy in sharing your love and paternal care with Henry, I should have been happy to have shared his with some amiable woman, whom I could have taken to my heart as my sister, the beloved wife of my dear brother. Such were the wishes that occupied me, if ever I thought on the subject of matrimony. Brought up from infancy with Henry, he has ever been to me a brother : in no other light did I ever think of him. He sees me with different eyes ; and from having lived more in the world, is better able to judge of the proportions of affection that men bear to women : I know of none, but which is filial and fraternal ; but shall I hesitate one moment in giving him my hand, with all the affections I believe my heart capa-

ble of feeling, when such a step will make you all happy? Forbid it, gratitude, and every valuable propensity of human nature! Yes, my beloved benefactor, be then my father; receive by the Divine law a prescriptive right to the duty and love I owe you, and which it is my joy to repay. Shall I, shall the child of your adoption, to indulge, perhaps, an improper wish, deliberate whether she shall be the means of closing your evening of life with comfort? Shall she shrink from the pleasing task of making a whole family happy? No, selfish Augusta, be not induced to hate, to despise thyself! I know," she continued kissing his venerable hand, "I know my beloved father will not precipitate his child. I will assure Henry I will be his wife. He will be satisfied. If it will not bear the complexion of a cold and perverse ingratitude, I should wish our marriage might not take place till I am twenty-one. From the laws of the country I might then, even if my dear unhappy parents were living, be allowed to chuse for myself. Oh! my dear Sir, if I might be indulged with this only tribute, save my tears, to their loved memory." Her voice dropped, and a gentle stream descended from her eyes. Mr. Monckley, kissing her moistened cheek, gave her the strongest assurances her own time and wishes should ever guide theirs. "Do not tell Henry then to-night of my (perhaps in his mind unreasonable) wish. I know he has still doubts of my sincere compliance: let not then the joy his affectionate heart will feel, when you confirm my promise to be his, receive the least damp. He deserves all the tenderness my heart can bestow, and all it can bestow, shall from this moment be his."

Henry was soon at the chaise door, to assist his father, who had discovered some indications of a gouty habit for some time, and was rather infirm. He gallantly handed the ladies out, and as soon as they were in the parlour, Mr. Monckley, taking Augusta by the hand, presented her to his son. "My Henry, receive the best gift a father can bestow on his beloved son : Augusta, the loveliest, most amiable of her sex now living, is your's."

"My father ! my Augusta !" exclaimed the enraptured Henry, "do I live ? Oh ! is this real, or the wild transport of a dream ? My father ! my angel !" dropping on his knees, and holding both their hands close pressed in his, "am I indeed so blessed ? And will not my lovely promised bride confirm these glad tidings with her charming lips ?"

"Indeed, Henry, I do most willingly."

"Then thus I thank you," cried he, nimbly springing on his feet, and pressing her to his bosom, snatched some of the most delightful kisses he had ever tasted. The gentle Augusta felt alarmed and abashed at his violence. She shrunk from his embraces, with the confused timidity of a delicate mind ; but though she did not, she could not repent of her condescension. She rejoiced ; she had before settled her preliminary article with Mr. Monckley. At her intreaty he suffered her to retire to her chamber. Half wild with rapture, he threw himself into the arms of his father and aunt Rachael by turns, declaring his joy was almost too much to be supported. The wine he had drank contributed to inspire him with the most intoxicating ideas of his happiness, insomuch that Mr. Monckley found it necessary to bring his

passions down to the standard of reason, by acquainting him, "that, although Augusta had voluntarily promised to be his, she must be treated with the utmost gentleness and delicacy; that his passion seemed to be the rapture of voluptuous sense, not the rational, warm, and glowing affection, that was to last all his days, and the only one which could ripen friendship, in such a bosom as Augusta's, into a mutual love; neither must she be hurried into a speedy marriage. She has promised to be your's; but her own time must, and shall determine the time when." Henry was but little inclined to adopt his father's cold instructions, but found he must submit to proper regulations, or lose the pleasure of Augusta's company at supper, as his raptures had really frightened her, and made her almost resolve to appear no more that night. It proved nearly a sleepless one to her, for although she determined that what she had promised to perform, she would perform gracefully with an accordsant mind; yet she could not help wishing it had never been expected from her. She sighed at the quickness of her sight in discovering some points of Henry's character not congenial with her own; and at the same time taxed her ingratitude, when her reason assured her that the very faults she complained of arose solely from the strength of his affection for her. She found he could not bear a resistance, and concessions on her part produced rapturous caresses on his side, which were as unpleasant as new to her. "Oh!" said she, gently sighing, and reproaching herself in the same moment, "how happy should I be to see Henry bestowing all these instances of his passion on some one, who loved him

well enough in return to receive them with pleasure. Is my heart cold? I have the tenderest regard for him; perhaps having so long looked on him as my brother, may make this new manner of loving appear unnatural to me. I shall never feel that comfort, that innocent joy, in accompanying him in walking or riding as I used to do. Oh! that he loved me not with such ungovernable violence, or that my bosom could feel, and be grateful for his attentions! I hope he will conquer his impetuosity, and suffer himself, as well as me, to be tranquilly happy. Oh! Henry, I fear, much fear, the accomplishment of your wishes will not constitute our mutual felicity. This morning I had not a single one unenjoyed. I now am perplexed, and full of a thousand nameless apprehensions, all militating against repose and peaceful slumbers; but our marriage will make my beloved and tender father happy: I hope it will make Henry so. I fear, oh, ! how much I fear, my own will not be the consequence! Either my heart is too cold to love, or Henry possesses not that kindred mind that is formed to inspire it with love: but heaven grant I may, at all times, so regulate my inclinations, that they may cheerfully accompany my duty in all things!

CHAP. X.

MORTALITY.

AFTER breakfast the next morning Mr. Malvern's steward came over to the rectory, begging the excuse of the family, for his master's not keeping his engagement of dining with them that day according to a promise he had made. He found himself much indisposed, and desired Henry and Augusta would call on him, as he wished to shew them some instance of his regard. The steward said, Mr. Malvern had sent to Exeter for a lawyer, who had just arrived as he set off from home. A message was returned that the young folks would not fail. Augusta would have been glad to be excused, because Mr. Monckley could not be of the party, and she no longer proposed to herself the pleasure she used so feel in a *tête à tête*.

"Henry, in his rapturous way, poured forth blessings on the head of Mr. Malvern for thus promoting his happiness, and expediting his union with the loveliest woman in the universe. "And will you not allow him to name the day of my felicity?" cried he, taking her hand, and struggling to kiss it.

"No, indeed, I will not, Mr. Monckley; indeed, Henry, you are too, too hasty."

“ Oh ! my sweet girl ! ” he said, fixing his eyes upon her, swimming with delight, “ why do you thus repress my tenderness ? Why do not your heart and eyes languish for that blissful moment as mine do ? ” Mr. Monckley saw Augusta was pained. “ Henry,” cried he, “ lovely as I allow the person of my beloved child is, I shall think you do not deserve her, if you do not admire and adore her mind, so fraught with every grace, so replete with every delicacy. From whence did my son learn the language of a mere voluptuary ? ” — “ From charms that make a voluptuary of a saint. Oh ! Sir, you talk like a stoic, or, pardon me, like a man who has outlived his passions : but to behold such beauty, even by her sweet resistance courting the attack, and to know such a treasure is to be mine, can you wonder at youth and its raptures ! Oh ! that the moment were at hand, to clasp her to my bosom, and pour forth all my soul in her arms. ”

“ Nephew ! why you talk like one of the rakes in a stage play ! I declare you are enough to put the poor thing in a twitter. Well, well, I hope it will not prove so ; but, they say, ‘ hottest love is soonest cold. ’ ”

“ A little of the cold fit would not at all be disagreeable, I must confess,” said Augusta. “ I doubt Henry’s affection and mine will not keep pace. His will be all exhausted e’er mine begins. Like a rapid stream that leaves its source dry will his be, while mine, like the river, will be full, but not, I trust, overflowing. ” “ Oh, you are so cold, my love, that your waters will freeze. ” “ A gentle steady sun may

prevent it," said she, with a smile. "The violent north wind may have a contrary effect."

"Aye, nephew, you may read that in the fables I used to read to Augusta while she was a little child, God bless her! standing at my knee, and turning up her pretty innocent face to mine, crying, again aunty, read that story again. Dear little soul! and I may live to see her children and your's do the same."

"Heaven grant you may, my dear aunt," said Henry, "and will not my betrothed wife say, amen?"

"You are too silly, Henry," replied Augusta. "I will go and make myself ready for our ride. Do you order the horses." Augusta preferred riding on horseback, as the rapture of Henry would be prevented by that mode of conveyance. He was of a contrary opinion, but she would not yield to his request, of taking the post chaise, and he was obliged to submit, though it was not without something, that in women would be called pouting.

They found Mr. Malvern very much disordered and heavy. The lawyer had just executed a codicil to his will, containing a gift of five thousand pounds, on the day of the marriage between Henry and Augusta Monckley, and a settlement of the same sum on their children. "I would have done more for you, my dear friends," said he, "but so near the grave as I think I am, all animosities should subside. My brother disobliged me exceedingly, and his son has kept up the quarrel, but to shew I die in charity with him, he will find great personalities, besides the estate, which must come to him. I hope, and have requested most earnestly, that he will allow the name

of Monckley, to remain as rectors of this parish. I hear a very good account of his son, I hope it is a true one, and that you will be good neighbours when I am gone."

Henry was full of grateful acknowledgments, and Augusta said every thing she could to raise the old man's spirits. She administered a cordial to him, which had been ordered; adjusted his cushion, and hung over him like an affectionate daughter, soothing him with her tenderness. They staid two hours with him, recommending him most carefully to his attendants. In the evening the old gentleman was seized with a paralytic stroke, and before noon the next day, he was no more.

This news cast a gloom on the minds of all at the rectory, and the first clerical duty Henry performed, was the funeral obsequies of his patron and friend.

"New masters, new servants. New lords, new laws," as Mrs. Rachael most emphatically said. Hardly was the household kept together, 'till the funeral of its old possessor. Lord Glamore sent his steward down to discharge all the domestics, who had grown grey in Mr. Malvern's service; there was an indelicate avidity in taking possession, that gave this new inhabitant of Malvern Park, a character at once rapacious and indecent. The first, and indeed only question he asked the late steward of his uncle's, was, "Who the devil were the Monckley's, of whom the old fellow had taken so much notice." "A most respectable and amiable family, my Lord," answered the old veteran. "Yes, I suppose some of those leaches that superannuated old fellows are so fond of. There is a pretty wife or daughter in the case, I dare say;

I know Malvern was a sly dog. Cannot I see the girl?" "Indeed, my Lord, I know not, they live very retired." "Damn their retirement, I warrant a Lord can unkennel them; shew me their house: but they ought to wait upon me." His various engagements in London, prevented the visit, if any had been intended from the rectory; and happy was Henry in particular, when he heard the Earl had taken his departure. He had learned from the late steward, that his Lordship was a man of great intrigue, and rapaciously addicted to women; we use that word, as expressive of his passion for them; for seduction was his glory, and too frequently had he triumphed over the virtue of the sex, by the basest and most ignoble methods. Numberless victims had fallen a sacrifice to his allurements or artifice. He had the reputation of having ruined, and introduced on the town, more beautiful young girls than most men of his time. His person was handsome, his deportment elegant and insinuating; critically correct in his dress; attentive to the embellishment of his figure, and unbounded in a prodigal generosity, when he could obtain his point by no other means. His age indeed was rather against the chance of conquest, for he was some years turned of fifty, but address, and a sprightly vein of conversation, gave him a more juvenile appearance than most men of that standing. And as young innocent girls were the objects of his amusement, his health had not suffered materially by his illicit intercourse with the sex.

One of the most amiable of women he had married about twenty-five years before the period we are now upon. She had been courted, flattered, adored, mar-

ried, and become indifferent to him, in a very short time. However, they lived on decent terms in the same house, and he generally honoured her assemblies with his presence. She had eventually brought him an immense fortune, and he spent it like a prince, in running horses, gaming, and ruining unprotected innocence. Such was Lord Glamore, the new possessor of Malvern Park, the only unmortgaged estate in his rent roll.

As enterprize and pursuit were his darling amusements, he speedily got through his business in London, and taking a joyous set of social and congenial spirits with his own, he repaired to the park. Mr. Monckley found a visit was expected, and therefore himself, with Henry, took an opportunity of leaving their cards. The next day the noble Earl returned the civility, and had the supreme felicity of seeing Augusta, who however not being charmed with the confident gaze of his Lordship, and seeing a damp struck on Henry's air, took the earliest opportunity of quitting the room, 'till she heard the departure of the visitor. She found neither father or son was pleased with their guest. Henry reprobated his impertinent curiosity, in inquiring so minutely, who Augusta was, and had coldly cut short the story, which Mr. Monckley had begun, of her history, by abruptly saying, "She was a relation, brought up by his father, and that very soon their mutual attachment was to be augmented by their union." Lord Glamore had requested the honor of their company to dine with him in a few days, and in the same evening came cards of invitation to each of the family, separately, for the following day but one.

The ladies requested to be excused their attendance. Mrs. Rachael from an uneasy sensation, which most women of her class and education feel, when in company of grand folks, and Augusta, from a dislike she felt to his Lordship's manner. They thought it unnecessary to send an apology, previous to the hour of engagement, as it might produce more pressing solicitations from the Earl, and which they were pre-determined to refuse.

Lord Glamore, with all his ton politeness, could not conceal his chagrin, when he saw the gentlemen unaccompanied by the angelic girl, whom he had already devoted to his pleasures. "Good God! my dear Sir," said he, as he shook the hand of Mr. Monckley, "are we not to be blessed with the company of the loveliest girl in the country? I have been betting with my friends here, a considerable sum, that I would shew them a beauty in a more finished style than they ever beheld. You cannot conceive how much I am disappointed. I hope she is well." "Rather indisposed by a cold," Mr. Monckley said. "Miss Monckley," said Henry, "would have been happy to receive the honor of an invitation from Lady Glamore, but the name of her ladyship not appearing, both my aunt and herself wished to decline the present party;" at the same time, with rather an air, too haughty in the eyes of the great men present, he glanced his round the room. "Oh, by the Lord, we would have made her welcome," cried one of them, who seemed of the tribe of parasites, one ready to laugh at all his Lordship's *bon mots*, or to assist him in any of his mal-practices. The party were not of the kind to conciliate the good opinion of either

Henry or his father, and they both rejoiced most heartily, that their beloved Augusta was not exposed to the senseless impertinence of these new acquaintance ; each, unknown to the other, making fixed resolutions, that they would repel all advances towards intimacy with his Lordship, as well as his associates.

Disgusted with the licentiousness of the table talk, and the freedom of manners in these town rakes, they gladly saw the hours haste away, which were marked only by intemperance, and of which, inebriety seemed the natural consequence. Early in the evening they ordered their chaise, and never scarcely were they more happy, than when they were whirled away from this Circean receptacle of Bacchanalians.

“ And these are the men of this world,” said Mr. Monckley ; “ such are our senators and rulers. Oh, Henry ! how much happier, and eventually fortunate are we, in the humble walk of life our Creator has placed us in, than to be associates and co-partners with such a race of beings, insulting their Maker, and debasing their natures !” “ I will never enter that infamous nobleman’s gates again,” said Henry, with warmth : “ never do I drink a glass of wine, but my lovely Augusta’s name sinks with it ; but I could not pledge his Lordship’s ; I thought it would have choked me, and I was near dashing its contents in that scoundrel’s face, who dared to join the loveliest and most virtuous of women, with an avowed strumpet.”

“ I am happy, my dear, you had so much command over your passion, I honoured you for it. The intemperance of their manners was peculiarly distressing to me, but reflected more dishonour on themselves. The silent contempt you displayed, mortified them ; and the

pride was deeper felt, because they had not the plea of retaliation. I was never more pleased, my dear Henry, with your conduct, it was manly and spirited, and must have raised you in their esteem, while their own characters must sink, even in their own eyes, into a mean contempt of themselves." Augusta congratulated herself in not being of the party at Malvern Park, and Mrs. Rachael "blessed her stars to think what an escape they had had, from such a set of vile abandoned rakes, who might have treated them very improperly."

On Sunday, out of curiosity, we may well suppose, this brilliant party honoured the parish church with their presence. The Rector's pew was unfortunately for the complexion of Augusta, next to the patron's. The poor girl knew not which way to look, so beset was she by the bold unabashed stare of these well-bred men of fashion. Henry was never less attentive to his duty in his life. He read the offices mechanically, for his mind was fixed on the unpleasant situation of his loved Augusta, and his eyes almost rivetted themselves to her pew, as if to intercept the insidious and constant glances of Lord Glamore. The subject of Mr. Monckley's discourse, might have awakened a sense of shame in that part of his auditors, to whom it was particularly addressed. But Cæsar ashamed! no;—for as Mrs. Rachael most notably observed, she dared to say, "that bold Lord had eaten shame, and drank after it, long ago."

All advances towards intimacy were so peremptorily, yet so delicately withstood, that his Lordship, who began not to be so keen a sportsman as formerly, and would now content himself with betraying the wife of

even his friend, thought he might as well wait for a sap, as subject himself to a failure in a *coup de main*; and having some money matters to settle, which his good providers, the Jews, were clamorous for, raised the seige for the present, and set off with the rest of Comus's crew, for London, where we will leave him to his own machinations, to attend to the concerns of our heroine, and the rest of the family.

Henry now began to breathe again, for never were the gardens of the Hesperides guarded with more caution by the sleepless dragon, than all the avenues to the rectory, by the jealous and more interested Henry. The information he had learned, of the abandoned principles, and passion for variety, which were the characteristics of Lord Glamore, filled his anxious bosom with ten thousand fears, for his lovely Augusta. From such a man he appeared reasonably to be alarmed for her safety, and which he thought he could by no methods so well secure, as by accelerating their marriage. Augusta laughed at his apprehensions of his Lordship, as groundless, or proceeding from his want of confidence in her. He combated both these opinions with warmth and tenderness, but could not prevail on her to consent to a speedy union. Mr. Monckley observed a neutrality on the occasion; he could not join in a measure, which he perceived repugnant to his darling; besides, the party on the opposite side was sufficiently strong, for Mrs. Rachael was a most powerful auxiliary to the cause of her nephew. Her forces were augmented, paradoxically by her weakness, not of mind, but body, for her health had been some time declining; she had long been afflicted with a bilious habit, and which several times

lately had attacked her in a degree that was very alarming, and which gave her a strong plea with Augusta, not to cross her wishes, as she frequently said, she "should neither live nor die happy, unless she saw Augusta the wife of Henry." Augusta, wearied by importunities, had fully determined, had they allowed her to wait her own time, to meet Henry with cheerfulness at the foot of the altar ; but she found she must sacrifice her inclination to theirs. She blamed her imagination, for having suggested the idea of sacrifice ; not that she felt herself more attached to Henry than before, but from the belief that she already loved him, as much as the coldness of her heart could ever feel, and hoped, by securing his happiness, her own might ultimately result from the same means, at least, in as strong a degree, circumstanced, and situated as she was, she had an idea of possessing. Henry pressed her to name some period to his anxiety and misery, declaring, he "should never feel the least peace of mind, till she was irrevocably his."

"I mean not, dear Henry," said she, "to make a merit of complying with a wish that ought to be mutual between us. I have not one that militates against our union, save that I have repeatedly mentioned : but surely to gratify, at best, a whim of my own, as our aunt says, I should be base and ungrateful to protract the days of your misery. Will you be satisfied, Henry, if I name this day three months ! Will you allow me this time to prepare myself for so awful a change ? for awful I must think it."

"Will I be satisfied ?" repeated he. "Oh ! my angelic Augusta, your sweet condescending compliance raises me above the nature of man. Yes, my

beloved, your wish—your reasonable wish, shall be complied with, with gratitude; the warmest that ever glowed in the heart of man. But, why an awful change, my love? No, on the contrary, it will be a delightful change, from anxious suspense to most rapturous certainty—a change in which you will participate in all my happiness. That I have some constitutional errors I allow; but my sweet monitress shall subdue them. All this impetuosity, of which you so often have complained, shall and will subside when I am blessed with you. It has proceeded from my fears of losing you, or rather of not obtaining your heart. Convince me of your tenderness, by yielding this lovely hand to your Henry, and all my fears, groundless fears, I trust, will be removed; your happy husband will then have a bosom so replete with joy, that a calm will succeed to the stormy perturbations which have so long oppressed it. Oh! our days, my fairest, will be one continued sunshine!”

“Heaven grant they may!” cried Mr. Monckley. “But, my dear son, you seem never to take the common chances of life into the account. You speak as if, and, I fear, think Augusta is not a mortal, subject to accidents, or the occasional errors of nature. Oh! if you do not make allowances for many circumstances that are drawbacks on the bliss of man, you will subject yourself to a variety of disappointments that will shake your philosophy. You contemplate your beloved Augusta as if she was an angel, not a woman.”

“Oh! no,” cried Henry, gaily laughing: “I hope to find her a dear, bewitching woman, in whom every charm centers, and who this day three months will make me the most blessed of men.”

“ Oh! fie, fie, Henry,” said aunt Rachael; “ upon my word, you do not seem to love like a Christian, and a clergyman. You talk in such a strange manner, I declare you are enough to call up the blushes of a modest woman, and make her afraid of you. I cannot think, not I, where you have learned this robusticalness.”

“ From nature, from nature, my dear maiden aunt.”

“ Then nature is a very bad instructor, nephew, that I can say, and religion ought to correct her.— You are a strange rude boy, Henry. Come, my dear Augusta, I will take you away to punish him: I am not at all well. You will be so good as to read to me; your sweet voice will lull me, and I may chance to get a little sleep.” Augusta most gladly attended Mrs. Rachael to her chamber. The lightness of Henry’s conversation gave her a painful idea that he did not feel that delicate and respectful tenderness which most women delight to inspire, at once so flattering to their self-love, and so dear to the innate principles of modesty. Few women feel gratified by a passion which any woman may create in a man who loves the sex, merely as the sex, and however pleased they may be with having their beauty admired and celebrated, are yet more charmed with the attentions of a man who loves them for the graces and virtues of their mind, which are so much more permanent than the attractions of their persons can be, and consequently will secure the affections of their husbands, when the beauty, which soon “palls upon the sense of lovers,” has lost its brilliancy: such as these were the reflections of our heroine, as she assisted Mrs. Rachael up the stairs. Her reading had the usual

and desired effect on her companion; for Mrs. Rachael having little taste for elegant compositions, the style of study most pleasing to Augusta, duly prepared herself for taking a nap whenever a book was opened. Her sleep, however, was now much disturbed; her disorder, which was continual retchings, returned upon her with redoubled violence; and Henry, who really loved, though he as dearly loved to torment, his poor aunt, with great anxiety rode as fast as he could to Exeter, to fetch an eminent physician to prescribe for this obstinate and alarming complaint. Mrs. Rachael had ever shewn the greatest averseness to taking the most simple remedies, and it was with the utmost difficulty the intreaties of her brother and nephew, with the tears of Augusta, could prevail to gain her consent for the physician even to see her, as she was from weakness obliged to keep her bed: but now all medical help was nearly useless, the violence of her neglected disorder had sapped the superstructure of her frame, and every paroxysm produced convulsions that hourly threatened her life! How duteous and attentive was the tender Augusta! She never left the bedside night or day! Henry joined her labours, and earnestly begged he might relieve her nightly watchings. He could not prevail. "Oh!" said she, weeping, "shall I quit one of my first friends: no, let me be indulged in paying the affectionate duty of a daughter to her who watched over my infant years with the fondness of the best of mothers." Her cares were soon of no service to the poor sufferer, and left her nothing to regret, but that they were useless to the object for

whom they had been exerted. Death was a new and awful subject to Augusta. She had loved and respected Mrs. Rachael Monckley as she would have done a mother, and the bitterest tears fell from her eyes as she hung over her clay-cold body, accompanied by this heart-rending reflection, that out of three persons, who in all the world had her interest at heart, she had for ever lost one, and that one of her own sex, at a time too, that she might so much want a kind companion, friendly and indulgent to all her wishes, and to whom she had been so long dear. All the good and amiable qualities of the deceased rose with added strength to her imaginations ; all her little foibles were forgotten, or if remembered, recollected but as the shades in a picture, which served to set off to more advantage her valuable actions. She died much regretted by all that were acquainted with her. Every body had something to say in her favour, or at least joined in the opinion we set out with,—that if she had not improved the world by brilliant talents, she had yet never injured it by debasing the humble ones with which she had been entrusted, but had walked meekly in the confined path allotted her in this life, unoffending either God or man, less conspicuous than many, more amiable than thousands ; could she be said to live or die in vain ?

CHAP. XI.

The Spider's most attenuated thread
Is cord, is cable, to man's slender tie
On human bliss.———

YOUNG.

THE death of Mrs. Rachael Monckley had thrown a damp over the minds of each of the inhabitants at the rectory, more particularly the old gentleman and Augusta. Henry's volatile disposition, though it had not hardened his heart against the finer feelings that adorn human nature, yet rendered impressions of sorrow less deep and poignant than in softer minds. Happy as he had thought himself in the abridgement which his aunt had prevailed on Augusta to make, from the time she had before fixed for their marriage, he now grew doubly anxious to have the day still shortened. He had been told Lord Glamore meant soon to return to Malvern Park, and all his jealous fears of that nobleman's machinations returned in full force; nor could he form to himself any scheme so likely to counteract his designs, than his becoming the legal protector of Augusta. It is a proof, Henry knew but little of the world, and the sentiments by which base men such as Lord Glamore are actuated. Situated as Lord Glamore was, and known in the neighbourhood to be a married man; he was precluded from attempting the stale pretext of striving to gain

the heart of Augusta, by proposing honourable terms for the most dishonourable purposes, therefore her marriage would have rather been a circumstance to have accelerated the attack of his Lordship, than to have retarded or induced him to lay his views aside; and he who had so flagrantly violated his own matrimonial engagements, was an unlikely person to have any compunction with regard to the vows of another; however, it served for an argument with Henry, and frequent and most unpleasant to Augusta were the altercations on the subject; by keeping her own time, the mourning for Mrs. Rachael would expire, and she used that circumstance as an act of decency which they were bound to pay her memory, and he ought to rest satisfied with the concessions she had already made. Henry was not of a disposition to be satisfied in any thing which crossed his inclinations; he acceded to her will very ungracefully, and threw out hints that it was clear he had not the good fortune to obtain her heart, or it must be from an unaccountable and unnatural coldness of constitution, which could make her averse to a step, from which all his happiness was to be derived. She endeavoured to conciliate his better opinion both of himself and her; by assuring him how very dear he was to her—that himself and his father made up, in her mind, the whole world; but that she loved him rationally—could see many faults in his temper, which, for his own sake, she wished him to correct, as their union would be happier by it: she owned still, that could she continue with propriety to live under the same roof with him, she should infinitely prefer the single to the married state.

She knew not if her preference arose from the coldness of constitution of which he complained, it was a point on which she could not decide; but that she believed herself of a temper to be more happy from its equanimity, than he was from the warmth of his imagination, which painted scenes of rapture, that it was impossible to find real in human life, and from suffering such delusive and airy plans of felicity to occupy his fancy, he must be subjected to various disappointments, which would fall heavy on him, in proportion to the distance his method of viewing common events through a false medium placed them at; all the happiness she expected to meet with in this world, was a reasonable proportion of its good things, with a resigned and acquiescent submission to the evils which it might please heaven to inflict. "You may compliment me," she added, "for the depth of my philosophy, or may laugh at the fallaciousness of one, which has not been put to many trials; but remember, it is the part of a good general to provide against adverse fortune, even in the day of his glory."

"But why, my dear Augusta, meet trouble? why fancy it will come? By all this caution, you rather invite the misfortunes, which may never befall you, but from apprehending them."

"As well, Henry, you may say, I anticipate rain, because I have taken an umbrella in my hand, but if an accidental shower should overtake us in our walk, you will be the first to rejoice that I had so much precaution, though I disavow foresight."

"Well, well, we will forbear to discuss that point just now. But you said, Augusta, you saw many faults.

in my temper ; if you candidly weigh them, and the principles that have given rise to them, I believe you will find the primary cause in yourself. The possession of your heart and hand, have, from early youth, been an object to which I aspired, the only view of my whole life,—how many disappointments have I met with ?” “ Which proceed, Henry, from the wildness and intemperance of your own disposition. No disappointment can be traced to any other cause ; a very few hours indeed elapsed, from the time I had the remotest idea of your entertaining such a wish, till I gave my free consent to be your’s.” “ Yes, my love, but with what a restriction ; what a never-ending period ?” “ Well, then, pray recollect too, how much of my own time I abridged, and with which you were then so perfectly satisfied ; and do remember too, that by for ever recurring to these altercations, you deprive both yourself and me of many peaceful and happy hours of mutual confidence we might enjoy.” “ Oh,” cried he with a sigh, “ your bosom knows not what love is ; not such love as mine.” “ It knows no joy in perplexing its object with doubts and inquietudes. I wish to see you happy and cheerful, rationally so, — not promising to yourself pictures, which have no foundation, childishly, I must say, believing that the married life is to be one scene of transport unallayed. The days of courtship are said to be so ; you know, and have proved the contrary ; for hardly one has passed, since your declaration of a passion, in which you have not, by some unguarded expression, made me almost repent of the concessions I have made in your favour. I say, my dear Henry, almost repent ; for I have nevertheless blamed myself too,

for what I condemned as unjust on my part, placing a great share of the cause of my complaints to the vivacity of your temper, and which was too much indulged before reason could assume a proper sway over your infant mind; therefore, as an error of constitution, I behold it with pity; nay, hear me out," (for he seemed disposed to interrupt her, in a manner she did not wish, and which would have laid a foundation for severe execrations of himself for his violence,) "I ever loved you most tenderly, from my earliest infancy too; and to my wish to continue to do so, to my latest age, is owing that I now speak to you with this candour. Let us never have any of these unpleasant bickerings; it is the vice of little minds, and proves the imbecility of nature in the greatest extreme, to require quarrels and reconciliations to keep up the flame of love. Only advert to the picture of one day, and after I have mentioned it, I will obliterate it from my memory for ever. My Henry I am certain, will never again give me cause to retain it. You offended my delicacy, by taking, I should think, an unwarrantable freedom with any young woman. My resentment was but in proportion to my idea of the offence; full of contrition for your unguarded conduct—your penitence and humiliation obtained my pardon; the concession only rendered you more bold, and so you went on, repenting and offending, till it ended in a serious quarrel. Was you the happier for this *brulé*? I am sure I was not, it cost me many sleepless nights. I hope I am not particularly delicate in my notions; I should rather hope it is natural to my sex; but that man can never love a woman he does not respect." Henry

called all the saints to witness to the truth of his love and respect for her, and vowed most fervently, she should never have cause to think, he would in future lose sight of the one by indulging the other. She assured him of her perfect confidence in his future conduct, and again declared this should be the last time she should reprehend him for what had passed. "I think myself," said she, "in a particularly delicate situation. All I am in this world, I owe to your family; that I am not the outcast of society, I am indebted to your father. All the love which relations would have claimed for a heart naturally tender, has centered in those to whom alone in this world I know, and they are all the world to me: to you, who, in a manner, I ought to deny nothing that could make you happy, had I not had this coldness (I would give it another name,) I might have yielded more than I ought; what would have been my situation, and what your remorse, had my inclinations been at times as little under my command as my Henry's." "Oh, Augusta, how severely do you condemn me; how cutting are those speeches." "Oh, Henry," said she, "how cutting to me were the causes that made me at the time the prey of such reflections. I trust most sincerely in your assurances, that I never shall have need to recall them; I give them to the winds, and do you abandon equally the thoughts, that you are not dear to your Augusta. Be thoroughly convinced, that if I entertained the least doubt that I ever could love another, as I think I love you, I would now this moment break off our expected marriage; a marriage, in which I hope we shall, to our latest be happy: that is, rationally, in mutual confi-

dence and reliance on each other, in each bearing our share of the common good and evil of this life ; in softening and participating the latter, and enjoying the former, like those who look forward to more permanent felicity in a future state." Henry felt too powerfully her excellence, to attempt controverting such fixed principles of propriety and virtue. He swore to be guided by her in every thing, and that he would make such a reform in his manners, that she should never again have the pain of renewing such a conversation. Thus was peace restored to the amiable heart of Augusta, and she began now to look forward to much happier days with him in the married state, than she could before flatter herself would have fallen to her portion.

There are few men who adored a woman more than Henry did Augusta ; but from a wild ungovernable flow of spirits and health, he had a degree of restlessness in his composition, that made him too negligent of the feelings of others : if any one could have a chance of correcting these unpleasant exuberances, it was Augusta. Her mildness, her good sense, and an uncommon steadiness, which prevented her at any time yielding her opinion against her judgment, though she dogmatically asserted it, were the best and most likely means to reform the errors which she plainly saw in Henry. The distress of mind Mr. Monckley had felt on the loss of his wife, had so absorbed all reflection, that the early and most dangerous season of Henry's life had devolved to the care of Mrs. Rachael ; and her unbounded love for so fine a child, and the want of education, and above all, the foundation of one, good sense, had contributed

in a great degree, to his being a spoiled child. Perhaps it was happy for him, that he formed so early an attachment to our heroine; for although it was not of that refined nature, as to prevent his being sensible of the charms of all other women, yet it secured him from being a fixed prey to the wanton part of the sex, to whom so many young men of his constitution have devoted themselves and become the victims. Augusta could now walk or ride with him, with some degree of pleasure, without being under the necessity of assuming a repulsive coldness in her manner, which she had often been forced to preserve in her demeanour and conversation, to keep him in decent bounds. As she said, her heart was not cold, but she possessed that innate delicacy, which shrinks at the unhallowed touch, or ardent gaze; her's was the

“Pure chastity, reddening as it moves along,
“Disorder’d at the deep regard it draws.”

Her days now passed cheerfully, in lively converse or improving reflections, and as her lot was cast, she insensibly lost that aching anxiety she had long felt, when the mystery of her origin recurred to her memory. She grew almost content with her destiny, and saw, without concern, the hours flit by, which would be terminated by her union with Henry. Her cheerfulness, which was indeed the result of his propriety of conduct, served to strengthen his good resolutions, and now he heard, as a matter of indifference, that the Earl of Glamore had become an inmate of Malvern Park.

But, alas! as was observed in the motto of this chapter, how fleeting is the happiness of man, and by what a slender thread hang all his hopes of permanent bliss! Mr. Monckley, about a week before the period fixed for the marriage of Henry and Augusta, was seized with a violent attack of the gout in his hands and feet, and was in consequence confined to his bed. Augusta had been particularly desirous their union should have the sanction of his joining their hands. The fit did not seem to abate, and Henry was as fully resolved that it should not protract the hour of his promised happiness. Mr. Monckley too, was unwilling any further disappointment should be given to Henry's wishes, and therefore consented to his request of applying to Mr. Bendley, for the purpose of performing the ceremony at the time appointed. Henry had dispatched a letter to Mr. Bendley to apprise him of the time; but so eager were his wishes, and so prevalent his fears that he should not arrive in time, that no intreaties of Augusta, could prevent his riding over the day previous to the long expected one, to repeat the request, of his old tutor, coming as early as possible the next morning.

Mr. Monckley was just able to sit up in his gouty chair surrounded with all the paraphernalia of imbecility, and Augusta had invited the sister of young farmer Hodson, a decent well behaved girl of her own age, to be with her that evening, and to go with her to church the following day. The mind of Augusta was composed, though not cheerful; she strove to shake off intruding thoughts, and had brought herself to contemplate on her great change with complacency and hope. They had just taken their tea, and were

watching for the sound of Henry's arrival, as it was growing duskish, and he had promised to be home by the time evening came on, as the roads were bad from a hard frost. While they were thus waiting, and expecting every moment to be joined by Henry, they heard Martha exclaim loudly, "Oh! good God! then some accident has happened!" Augusta flew, trembling to the passage: she eagerly enquired the cause of such an outcry. "O Lord, Madam, young Mr. Monckley's horse is just come to the gate, and David says as how he is sure young master is thrown!"

"Oh heaven preserve him!" cried Augusta in great agony; "but keep the fatal intelligence from your master." This precaution however was too late: the exclamation, even the caution of Augusta had reached the poor old gentleman's ears. Susan Hodson had ran out, and met her brother, who had seen the horse gallop by without his rider, and had ran to the rectory to gain some information, or know if he could be of any service to the family. He and David both set off, with a young man, to seek the unfortunate Henry, and afford him any assistance in their power. What were the feelings of the father and Augusta during this torturing suspense between the anxious doubts and dreaded certainty! their mutual forebodings of the worst, with the torpid silence of each, for fear of strengthening the other's alarms; the pale countenance of Augusta, as she knelt beside her beloved Mr. Monckley, and now and then starting up and hurrying to the door, to listen for sounds she dreaded to hear, all contributed to a scene that beggars description. At last the smothered anguish of the wretched father burst forth: "Oh,

my merciful God ! I hear a groan." The melancholy sound had, at the same moment, harrowed up the soul of Augusta. "O Father of mercy !" continued Mr. Monckley, "spare, O spare an old man's misery ! Do not, do not bereave me of my beloved son !" Half wild and fainting, Augusta sunk down on the floor ; but recollecting herself, she said, in a voice that spoke all the anguish of her bosom, "Oh, my dearest father ! help me to support this fatal trial. Oh ! my sinking heart, how will it bear up alone, if you forsake me !" But assuming more confidence, "Any certainty is better than such horrid suspense : " so saying, she sprung up on her feet, and hastened out of the room. Alas ! what a sight to meet ! The unhappy dying Henry supported, and even carried, like a corpse, by some young men of the village !

"For heaven's sake, Miss !" cried Hodson, "do go back into the parlour—be comforted—I hope he will yet live : I am going in all haste for a surgeon. Dear Susan and Martha keep her from the body." Their efforts, however, were vain. "Oh ; if he yet lives, if yet my Henry lives, what sufferings of my own shall keep me from him—from rendering all the services in my power ? Oh, my Henry ! my beloved Henry ! did we part thus to meet ?" She followed the young men up stairs to the chamber, where they laid the object of her grief and tenderness on the bed. He turned his almost lifeless eyes upon her, and made a motion with his lips, but was unable to articulate the least sound. Her face, the picture of woe, bathed in tears, was reclined on his, as she knelt by the bedside. Her soul, in the deepest anguish, was lifted up in petitions for his restoration, to that Power who

alone can heal the afflicted. Her thoughts recurred to the dreadful situation of poor Mr. Monckley.—“Oh ! some one go to my father,” said she ; “for heaven’s sake ! make the best of this unhappy accident to him. Oh ! no, your weeping eyes and pale faces will but confirm his fears : I will go. O God strengthen my heart, that I may give comfort to the best of human beings !”

“Alas ! my dear Miss Monckley,” said Miss Hodson, “your countenance will destroy him at once ; you are covered with blood too : no, I had better go down.” Hardly were the words uttered, when the poor old man, almost frantic with grief, rushed into the room, and threw himself on the bed, embracing and weeping over his unfortunate son. The sight transfixed Augusta with horror ! She might have challenged the world to produce a more afflicting spectacle ! Still she had recollection enough to urge the strongest intreaties to him to withdraw from a scene, in which his participation but increased the agonizing circumstances, and made them almost too much for reason and nature to support. By gestures too, she found how much Henry was distressed by the sight of his father’s affliction. She exerted all her power to persuade the old man to retire.

“What !” cried he frantically, “is he not dying ! And shall I leave him ? No, I have no further use for life ; I will die with him. Oh !” continued he, raising himself up, and striking his forehead with his clasped hands, “Oh ! what a world is this ! Have I lived to be thus bereaved ? What greater misery could fall on this white head, than to be borne to the grave with such affliction ! Eternal Providence,

thou hast filled my cup of sorrow, and I drink to the bitter dregs : it is too much ! too much !” cried he with a wildness of voice and aspect, that plainly shewed the derangement of his faculties.

“Oh ! comfort and restore him, sweet heaven !” cried Augusta, extending her hands, and lifting up her weeping eyes : “or, if it be thy blessed will, crush me also, and let us die together.”

Henry, though unable to speak, and hardly evincing his existence, unless by faint groans, was yet sensible of the mournful effect his misfortune had upon his father, his looks alternately fixed on him and Augusta. By this time the surgeon arrived, and then Mr. Monckley was carried out of the room, which a fainting fit had rendered both necessary and easier to perform. Augusta unwillingly yielded to their request, and slowly and silently followed him ; but her impatience to hear the result of the surgeon’s examination, prevented her going down the stairs. She seated herself on them, resting her head, beating with agony, against the banisters, her mind all confused, and her ideas in that kind of state, that they could fix on nothing. A cold torpid chill pervaded all her faculties ; it seemed a fearful pause of nature, like that which one should think preceded an earthquake. The looks of the domestics and others, that passed her to provide dressings, or other things that were wanted, were of a nature to preclude all hope. “Alas !” cried she, “then there is no hope ! The dye is cast, and I am doomed to lose him ! Oh ! heaven, in mercy abate his sufferings—allow him to depart in peace—ease his tortures—and I am content to bear all the portion of sorrow thou hast dealt forth

with an heavy hand. Permit me," said she to the surgeon, "to attend in the room : I will smother my own anguish, and the sight of her he so much loved may cheer his dying moments."

"Indeed, my dear Madam, you had better not, the sight must be too affecting; in a few moments all will be over."

"And shall I then spare myself those moments?" cried she, eagerly : "no, those last moments I will spend with my Henry. He does not groan now," she continued ; "Oh ! I trust heaven has heard my prayers, and softened his agony."

"The principles of life are nearly exhausted," added the surgeon.

"He stirs ! He moves !" said Augusta, with a voice broken by terror.

"Yes," answered the surgeon, "it is the revulsion of nature. He is now almost insensible."

"Does he not then feel pain?" she asked.

"I believe not."

"Then I bless the Almighty for this short comfort !"

Henry just opened his eyes, now almost colourless, yet still they were fixed on her. She bent forward, and pressed her cheek to his, which was now cold and clammy, for the hand of death had chilled it. He heaved a sigh—a fainter—and a fainter still succeeded at intervals—one hardly perceptible followed, and all was over ! The surgeon, who was both a man of compassion and good understanding, sought not by common-place arguments to console the afflicted Augusta in this severe trial of human and female fortitude. "All that can be done is now, my dear

Madam, accomplished; it behoves us to attend to those that remain. I am certain you will exert yourself for the sake of Mr. Monckley: allow me then to intreat you to quit this melancholy room, where all your grief is unavailing, for that, where your affection for the living must be the strongest proof of your regard for the unfortunate cause. He is now at rest; but I fear very much for his father."

"Oh! I will go to him: I am thankful, Sir, for your goodness in reminding me of my duties. Oh! that I could soften his affliction! I fear, indeed, his head is disordered. Alas! my own is so likewise, or I should have thought sooner how much he stood in need of my assistance. I remember too, he rushed into Henry's room. Good God! and he has not stood on his feet before these ten days."

"I will give him a cordial, which, I hope, will throw the gout again into his limbs; and, my dear young lady, you must suffer me to prescribe likewise for you. You are cold as death. I wish you would permit me to take a little blood from your arm. The agitation of your mind, with so heavy a loss, will otherwise, perhaps, render you incapable of affording that assistance to poor Mr. Monckley so necessary in his afflicted state."

"What you please—any thing you please: I dare say you are right," cried Augusta, hardly knowing what she said. "Indeed, I feel an uncommon tightness here," placing her hand on her breast. "I cannot shed a tear: I am glad of it too, for my dear father will extract great comfort from seeing me so composed." The surgeon shook his head at her vain

idea, for her face and figure were so much the picture of restrained grief, that had he not thought it advisable that both the mourners should be roused, he would not have suffered her to present herself before Mr. Monckley.

They found the servants had got him into bed before he had recovered from his fainting fit; but that now he was so wild and ungovernable that it was with difficulty they could prevent his rising. The gout had seized his head, and all he uttered was of the most incoherent nature, yet there was a "method in his madness," that tore and tortured the exquisite feelings of the wretched Augusta. "Oh!" cried he, in a voice hoarse and hollow, "you told me you loved him!—that you would marry him!—that you would be the comfort of my latter days!—Why then have you killed him? Why have you torn him from me? Why did I preserve you in infancy to rob me of my son, my first born, the son of my lost Matida? Oh! accursed day that has brought misery on my house, and my grey hairs in sorrow to the grave!"

"Wretched, miserable Augusta!" cried she, holding by the bed post—"what a fate is thine! But this I cannot survive: no, the dagger's point drinks my blood, and I shall expire, while the best of men heaps curses on my head!" While she was speaking, her hand slid down the post, and she would have sunk to the ground quite insensible, had not the friendly surgeon supported her in his arms. The women applied some remedies for her recovery, while he prepared something to compose Mr. Monckley's frenzy; and when he found Augusta in full possession

of her senses, he humanely explained to her the nature, as well as effects, of the poor old gentleman's disorder, and calmed her apprehensions of his really execrating her for this unavoidable misfortune. Her purity and piety rendered his task an easy one. She submitted to his advice of being bled, which relieved the oppression she had complained of, and gave her excellent and unerring judgment power to act with its accustomed precision. All the efforts and skill of this benevolent surgeon could not obtain his wish of forcing the gout into the extremities, and without his being able to accomplish this point, he foresaw imminent danger to his patient. So anxious was he for Mr. Monckley's recovery, that he rode over himself to Exeter, to bring the physician before mentioned, that their united endeavours might be exerted for that purpose; but all human efforts were fruitless. By the help of anodynes and soporifics, they, in some measure, restored his reasoning faculties; but they could drive the disorder no lower than his stomach. Augusta felt some consolation in receiving the tenderest assurances of his unabating love for her. For her sake he even wished to drag on a life of misery, and earnestly begged she would send for a lawyer to make every alteration he could in her favour, in addition to what he had before left her; but from a too scrupulous delicacy she would not attend to the subject. On the third day her venerable friend, the first and last she had in the world, expired in her arms!

Here let us pause, and reflect for one moment on the adverse fate of the forlorn Augusta, torn from her parents and native home by a most fatal accident; she then was happy, because insensible of her misfortunes.

Now, that a more than common understanding had refined her sentiments, and enlarged her natural sensibility, behold her deprived of every stay, every guide and protector, a beautiful and elegant young creature, under nineteen !

CHAP. XII.

A GENEROUS OFFER.

WITH a mind deeply weighed down with sorrow, Augusta found she had various calls for every exertion of all her faculties, and she had no one to share the perplexities with which she saw herself surrounded. She felt with the keenest poignancy that she was alone in the world, an object in whom no one took interest, and on no human being could she lay claim to protection. All the melancholy presages of future and present distress burst upon her imagination, without a friend to advise, or even to communicate her griefs to. To Mr. Bendley, indeed, she looked forward with some hope that he would assist her with his counsel, and to him she sent to know how she should apply to the brother of her beloved benefactor, and who was now his sole heir. Mr. Bendley had received the melancholy news from the rectory by farmer Hodson. He most kindly came to her, and joined his tears with her's for their mutual loss.

He could stay with her but a few hours, as he had left his wife ill in bed, and was anxious to return to her. Augusta had entertained a latent hope that he would have offered her an asylum in his house till she came of age: however, it was not made, nor could she propose it. From his silence she concluded he had either not thought of it, or that it was not convenient to admit that increase to his family. The true reason of Mr. Bendley having been totally silent on the subject, arose from a domestic cause.

Some time before Henry had quitted the house of his tutor, being always a youth of gallantry, he had, from the impossibility of his being under the same roof with a fine girl without making love to her, been exceedingly attentive to Amelia Bendley. The freedoms in his behaviour, from which the native delicacy of Augusta recoiled, served to persuade Amelia that she was beloved by him, and which fancied passion she returned with a real one. Always flattering herself she had made a lasting impression on his heart, and that he would ever be grateful for the concessions she had made, though to Henry's honour it must be related, that these condescensions had never been carried to the lengths the incautious Amelia had given encouragement to fear, they might have been. Her heart, however, was devotedly fixed on Henry, and her disappointment, and mortification, when she was fatally convinced, that she really never had been the object of his serious attachment, had had the most alarming effect on her health. She hated her innocent rival, who was as equally ignorant of her ill-placed passion; but jealousy is a baneful weed, that destroys all the good seed in the human

heart; for her hatred still pursued the unhappy destitute Augusta, with the same rancour it had, while she appeared near the completion of the utmost felicity in the eyes of Amelia, that of being united to Henry. On that fatal day, which proved the last of Henry's life, she had vented the most violent reproaches to him for having deceived her by an appearance of an attachment, which had no foundation, or rather, which, as she chose to believe had been superseded by the artful coldness of Augusta. He attempted to vindicate himself, and she, who was dearer to him than himself, from the illiberal attacks of this imprudent young woman. His temper partook of a similar violence with her own, and it was with difficulty he could be prevailed on to stay dinner. The real honour which resided in his bosom, as an innate principle, made him severely condemn the folly he had been guilty of. He felt his spirits hurt and depressed, both from her reproaches, and the consciousness of having in part deserved some of them. In consequence of his chagrin, and to get the better of it, he pushed the bottle about very freely, to force a vivacity, which from pique he was desirous of appearing to possess. The effects of the wine was one cause of the fatal accident which befel him on his return. Mr. Bendley had meditated the design of inviting Augusta to his house as a boarder.—This, when mentioned, his daughter, in a peremptory tone, declared she would never submit to; adding, “one house should never contain her, and her bitterest enemy.” If a man has not peace at home, where can he find it? And this being the state of things, Mr. Bendley found he must either be embroiled with domestic differences, or

appear cold to the interests of Augusta. He had no alternative, and was therefore constrained to act that part most foreign to the benevolence of his heart, and not being artful enough to frame a reasonable excuse, took care to say nothing which should lead to the future residence of this poor deserted girl. The pride of Augusta would not suffer her to make any advance, and thus the visit passed off without the subject being once started. He however undertook to send to Mr. Benjamin Monckley, to acquaint him of the deaths of his brother and nephew, and he gave all the necessary instructions for their respective funerals, promising to come over and perform the last melancholy office for his dear departed friends. Augusta had none of that weakness in her composition as to occasion her to fly from the objects of her love and her grief. She spent many hours in the apartment of death, weeping over the pale bodies of those who were dearest to her while living. It soothed her melancholy to contemplate their loved features—to talk to them—to beg their angel spirits to look down upon her sorrows, and insure comfort and confidence to her pained heart. While she remained with them she felt composed; but when she quitted the room, she looked round on all sides, and saw no place—no one on whom she could rely for support. She then found herself alone in the world, and saw the wreck of all her hopes of happiness without one plank to save her from destruction.

Two or three days before the funerals Lord Glamore called, and sending up his name, begged to be permitted the honour of waiting on her. She was then in her favourite room, with her mind so elevated

above the world and "its nonsense all," that she returned a cold compliment, that she saw no one. He had, however, so much assured himself of feasting his eyes with the fair mourner, that he had seated himself in the parlour. When Martha brought him the denial, he felt very much mortified; but was determined to gain a friend in the family, and therefore, with great condescension, and apparent generosity, asked Martha a number of questions, and put a guinea into her hand, begging her to be very careful in her attention to her young lady, whose loss he most pathetically lamented. His bounty and civility contributed to open the heart of Martha, and set her tongue a running. He enquired what relations Miss Monckley had?

"O Laws, Sir! I ax your parding, my Lord; why, she has no relations in the versal word, as I may say. She is no kin to poor old master, nor never was: he took her a little child, and brought her up, as it were all his own."

"Where did she come from?"

"Lord! my Lord, why she did not come, for she could not walk. My master found her. She came from somewhere beyand sea. I thought as how she wud be able to tell 'un when she came to talk; but she never said a word about it; so if she knows, 'tis a secret from all the world beside. I know if Madam Rachael had known, she'd ha tell'd me, for she was pure chatty with sarvants."

"Oh! I think I have heard that Mrs. Rachael Monckley is dead. How came she to die?"

"Laws! I don't know, not I. She was taken with a strange sort of reeching, saving your presence, my

Lord, and I know I have often heard old master say, when she complained, that she would reach her grand climesterie, for his mother did so, and so did she, I believe, for I never seed such stuff. I ax your parding, my Lord, for speaking so bold : I thought she would have brought up her heart, as well as her grand climesterie : however, when she had reached that, she never ate or drank, and so she died, and so I think we shall all die. Here's poor master Henry, as fine a young gentleman as the sun could shine on, and the wedding-dinner, as we may say, ready for the spit ; to be taken off !... Indeed he was thrown off his horse, and died before he could say, Lord, ha mercy ! Then old master broke his heart, and now poor Miss Augusta ; why, she will grieve herself to an otamy, and to have no father or mother, or even cousin, as I can hear of, and then to lose her sweetheart too, nay, he was almost as good as a husband ! Oh, Lord ! I shall never forget, it was but the night before he was killed, that he would put the wedding-ring on her finger to see as it wud fit, and kissed her pretty rosey cheek, and called her his wife ! Ah ! poor dear young gentleman, he little thought he should be in a shroud before he was in his wedding-sheets ! Well, well, we are here to day, and gone to-morrow, as the saying is."

Again Lord Glamore recommended Augusta to her care, and being heartily tired of the gabble of Mrs. Martha, and disappointed of his hope of seeing the object of his wishes, he took his leave, impressing Martha, with a much higher opinion of Lords than she had entertained, having always conceived they were very haughty, and would not demean themselves, as she thought, by talking to servants and poor folks.

In the same evening he addressed a letter to our heroine, hoping to gain her confidence and good-will.

—This letter, or rather note, ran thus :

“ Lord Glamore feels most sensibly the heavy loss sustained by the amiable Miss Monckley. His visit of this morning was to assure her of his sincere condolence with her ; and at the same time to convince her of the regard he entertains for her worth, as well as the respect due to the memory of his uncle, the late Mr. Malvern. In consequence of both, he begs Miss Monckley will honour him with the acceptance of that sum, which, but for an accident ever to be deplored, would, in the course of a few hours, have been her's by indisputable right. If Miss Monckley will allow Lord Glamore the honour of waiting on her, at her own time, he will have the pleasure of presenting notes to the amount of five thousand pounds, or if she, for the present, declines a personal interview, his steward shall wait upon her to-morrow for that purpose.”

A sum of five thousand pounds would have been a most desirable acquisition to a young woman, circumscribed in her fortune as Augusta ; but an innate pride and spirit of independence actuated her to refuse it, even before she gave herself time to recollect the offer came from a man who was avowedly disliked by her dear Henry.

“ Oh ! no, my friend, almost my husband,” she cried, bending over the coffin, and kissing the cold forehead of Henry ; “ never shall thy betrothed wife commit an act thou wouldst have disapproved !”

She detained the messenger, while she answered the very generous proposal of the Earl.

“ Augusta Monckley, with every sense of Lord

Glamore's unexpected generosity, and grateful acknowledgment for his condolence, begs leave to decline both the one and the other. Her mind is too much absorbed by her melancholy situation to receive visits of any nature ; nor can she, on any consideration, receive that as a present which heaven saw fit to deprive her of as a right."

On reading it over, she thought she had expressed herself with too severe a pride : but she could not prevail on herself to alter it. She hoped her positive refusal would preserve her from his visits, and what other effect it might produce in his opinion, gave her no concern.

Lord Glamore, with a heart beating high with hope and exultation, tore open the note:—"D—n the little haughty devil!" he exclaimed, as he threw the paper into the fire, with a countenance enflamed by passion, "to refuse five thousand pounds, and offered with such delicacy too! I don't know where she came from, indeed, as that chattering magpye said this morning. Where could she get such sentiments? I will, however, set more springs to catch my bird. Take care, my little Augusta, for by heaven you shall not escape me, though this scheme is blown to the devil, by a puff of sentimental pride and disdain."

"Can I be of any service to your Lordship?" cried a pert little fellow, who had just arrived at Malvern Park, on hearing there was a church benefice to be disposed of, and who had just taken orders as a dernier resource against starving, or committing some act that would bring him to the gallows, if detected ; for had he met with his deserts, he would have been intitled to that distinction long since.

This sprig of divinity had ran through a small paternal fortune, before he came into possession, in every species of vice that could disgrace a man. He then studied the law; but his practices were more calculated for the abuse of them, than to make them serviceable to community. He received a severe check from the inflexible and truly worthy Thurlow, which rendered it necessary and prudent to give up all thoughts of the long robe.

From having performed some essential services in the annals of seduction to his friend Lord Glamore, he through his interest, trailed a pike in the guards. His gratitude kept pace with his patron's principles, and he was raised to the great pre-eminence of pimp and parasite; but being detected in a most iniquitous scheme of ruining a young man by false dice, and his sister, by seducing her for his noble patron's use, the officers of the regiment, *una voce*, requested the favour of him to send in his commission to the Colonel, or they would kick him out of the guard-room. A base mind dwells in the breast of a coward. He submitted to the first of their injunctions, fearing the threat would be put in execution, and not having the courage even to assume a fighting face, made his bow, and retired from the mess.

"He had now the world before him where to chuse," so he took counsel of thought, and presented himself to his friend in iniquity. They consulted together, and as he had been threatened out of both his professions, the only alternative was the church: but a little difficulty occurred how he should get ordained. Just at this time the nation was saved from ruin, by the recovery of health to the best of Kings. A ter-

tain opposition Bishop, out of pique to the Chancellor, was easily prevailed on to add this rotten pillar to the Christian church, and, with a small stipend from his patron, and living as he had long been accustomed to do, by his wits, he contrived to cut a figure, and run in debt with as good a grace as any man of fashion.

No sooner did he read in the papers of the death of the incumbent, than he left a joyous circle of staunch revolutionists at the Shakespeare, and drawing on his boots, never left spurring his horse till he arrived at Malvern-Park, to put in his claim for the first living which fell in his Lordship's gift; and the Rev. Mr. Bellamy had not been many minutes in the drawing-room with his honourable friend, before he heard the before-written comment on Augusta's refusal.

"Can I be of any service to your Lordship?"

"You be d—d!" cried his Lordship, stamping about the room; "yet faith, upon second thought, I do not know, Dick, whether you cannot.—Come, let us have some Champaigne, and as that mounts, perhaps, we may strike out something in which you may render me assistance."

"Make me Rector, my noble Lord, and I will marry the girl; and you know how far my gratitude is bound to your Lordship."

"Oh! yes, that is likely enough she would marry you, when she has just lost a fine spirited, young, handsome fellow, within two or three hours of being her husband. What the devil should she see in your d—d ugly face to captivate her? She, who has just refused five thousand pounds from a spirit of independence!"

“Well, well, give me the presentation, and I will conjure this spirit out of her, and any other into her, that will answer your Lordship’s purpose, or I will go to the devil in a whirlwind.”

Leaving these plotters of mischief drinking bumpers to the demolition of chastity, and such edifying sentiments, we will return to the concerns of our heroine.

The last melancholy duties paid to her deceased and only friends, all that remained for her, was to weep their loss, and endeavour to frame her mind to some course for her future subsistence. She knew when she came of age she was to receive two thousand pounds by the will of the late Mr. Monckley, but to that period she wanted a year and half. She feared too, from the character she had heard of Mr. Benjamin Monckley, that she should receive some trouble from him, for he was like his brother in nothing but in name. The small household, together with herself, she had put into the deepest mourning for their sad loss. She expected the heir would have come with all celerity ; but as he did not, she thought herself justified in fulfilling what she thought right with regard to the expences of the several funerals, and every circumstance attending them. The day after this mournful exhibition, of a father and a son conducted at the same time to the grave, she received the following letter from Mr. Benjamin :

“ To Miss Augusta Monckley, these.”

“ Miss,

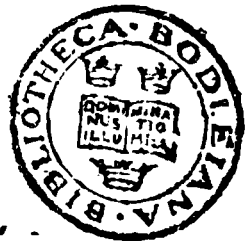
“ I find, by a letter from parson Bendley, that my nephew Henry has been killed by a fall from his

horse, (hunting, I suppose,) and that my brother broke his heart, and that they are both dead, whereby I come in for what is left, which to be sure I did not expect, so it is, as I may say, a windfall in my favour.

“I hope you have not been extravagant in burying them, for I think it nothing but folly to put so much money into the hands of rascally undertakers, and as I am heir at law, to be sure it will be expected, as I should pay the bill. I shall expect to find every thing as my brother left it, and be sure the will be not opened till I come; but I am getting my Lent corn into the ground, and am very busy; but you may remain in the house till you see me: however, keep in your mind, that I am to be “Jack pay for all,” so don’t be axing all your neighbours to drink and carouse at my expence, because that will be no how.

“I forgot my manners, though for to be sure I should say something about condoling with you on the loss of your sweet-heart. Your husband I find he would have been, if young hopeful had not broke his neck; to be sure, it must be a main disappointment to a young girl, who was within an ace of being as wise as her mother. It is a sad thing truly, and I am heartily sorry for your misfortune, and yet one’s loss is another’s gain. It is so all the world over. So no more at present, Miss,

“From your’s to command,



“BENJAMIN MONCKLEY.”

This letter was not of a nature to conciliate the

good opinion of Augusta : parsimony and gross ignorance were the leading features ; but she consoled herself that she was not bound to remain with him, and she hoped, with œconomy, she might maintain herself till the time when she should receive her small fortune. Of her finances she took a retrospect. The last fifty pounds, which Mr. Malvern had given her, still remained in notes, and she had near twenty guineas in cash. With this sum she thought she could subsist herself for near two years, when the first dividend of her fortune would become due. In her grief she had lost the wish that had for near four years so much occupied her imagination, and even the hope of finding her family was absorbed in the present concern for her recent misfortunes. She saw nothing through the impenetrable gloom that had darkened her prospects : and she regarded herself as a being who had nothing to hope, or as little to fear, for the rest of her melancholy life. Alas ! she knew not the vile machinations that were carrying on in Malvern Park for her eternal destruction ! Happy ignorance ! how much of our felicity do we owe to thee !

She heard, without emotion, that the living was presented, and that the new Rector was to be inducted the following Sunday. It was an event, which in the nature of things, must happen, and therefore had nothing alarming in it to a mind so supported as her's. In the afternoon of the induction, with a most indecent avidity, as she thought it, but with the most sinister view in the new Rector, he came without previous notice, and without ceremony or apology was introduced to the parlour where Augusta was

sitting. Conscious guilt abashes even the most hardened villain. It was with difficulty he announced himself, "The Rev. Mr. Bellamy, who had the honour of succeeding to the Rectory."

Augusta rose with an air of dignity, and a steady look, which he might interpret into, "And what have I to do with the Rev. Mr. Bellamy?" As he did not like the translation, he was determined to carry his business through by impudence.

"Do not let me keep you standing, my dear Madam; I will take a seat:" so saying, he threw himself into a chair, and Augusta thought it would be too grossly rude to quit the room, so quietly sat down again.

"Here seems to be a pretty garden, Ma'am. Is the house convenient? though, indeed," not waiting for an answer, "I shall not be much here, unless I can persuade some lovely woman to reside with me, for I shall spend most of my time with my friend Lord Glamore. Upon my soul, Ma'am, he is one of the best fellows in the whole catalogue of peers, and as generous as a Prince; that, indeed, I need not remark to you—as you had so strong a proof of the nobleness of his spirit. He regards money, only as it procures happiness to himself or others: but, upon my soul, Ma'am, I never saw any one so chagrined as his Lordship was when you refused the present he offered you. Indeed, it is the wish of his heart to oblige people, and I am certain you could not do him a greater kindness, than making his Lordship your protector."

"Lord Glamore must be convinced, Sir, that my answer was decisive. If you wish to see the house

and garden, a servant shall attend you : at present I am engaged."

"No, no, my dear Madam, I will call another time—to-morrow, perhaps. If you had been disengaged I would have had the honour of taking my tea with you this afternoon, and looking over the premises; but it will do another day as well. I should be sorry to incommode so charming a creature ; and therefore I beg, my dear Madam, you will consider yourself quite at home."

"Sir, Mr. Bellamy," said the astonished Augusta, "permit me to understand you."

"Oh ! my dear creature," attempting to take her hand, which she withdrew hastily, notwithstanding the charming languor with which he thought he had dressed his face, "I am really almost petrified to be under the necessity of saying disagreeable things to the most agreeable woman I ever saw : but you know the house goes with the living, and though it is a cruel circumstance to me to utter such unpleasant truths, yet I see there are many alterations wanting, and I should be desirous of sending in some workmen. Do not, however, my dear Madam, be under any uneasiness : I see enough of you to be convinced we shall not fall out about trifles. I promise you, upon my soul, you shall have an apartment in it as long, or upon what terms you please, egad."

If he had been capable of petrification, the look which Augusta gave him might have had that effect : she, however, smothered her disdain, and only said, coldly, "I am not conversant with the world, nor have I often seen the kind of gentleman who is before me ; but I should suppose decency, if not custom,

would prescribe some rule in these cases. The brother of Mr. Monckley I expect every day—to him I refer you.” Saying which, she rang the bell. His impudence no longer stood his friend, and almost in as much confusion as when he was threatened to be kicked, did the Reverend Mr. Bellamy take his departure! The sneaking Jackall made but a lame account of his negociation when he returned to the Lordly lion, who cursed him heartily for his stupidity, resolving to make one effort himself, and not trust any more to such a weak advocate as the quondam Captain Bellamy.

Accordingly the noble Earl sallied forth the next morning, and took Augusta by surprise, for she was walking in the garden deeply ruminating on the severity of her fate, and anxiously wishing, yet dreading, the arrival of Mr. Benjamin Monckley. Lord Glamore had gained a friend in the citadel by his courteousness and bounty to Martha, who informed him her young lady was in such a walk, so that he came upon her so suddenly, she had no power to avoid him; not that she wished to do so from any apprehensions of danger, but that all company was distasteful to her in her melancholy situation.

He spoke with precipitation and tremor. “He was happy to see her, and he lamented her cause for mourning, assured her of his veneration, and that nothing would so much contribute to his happiness as being instrumental to her’s.”

She politely thanked him for the interest he was pleased to take in her concerns.

“Oh, God!” cried he, “you know not how much I am interested: I never saw so divine a creature in

my life ! but my lovely angel, why did you refuse the trifle which I consider as your right ?”

“ My Lord, I had hoped, as I mentioned to Mr. Bellamy, that your Lordship had understood my answer to be decisive.”

“ How could I understand what would make me wretched ? No, my beloved Miss Monckley, you must not refuse me this instance of my regard, my love, my adoration.”

“ If I refused your offer, my Lord,” she replied, with quickness, mixed with scorn, “ even on the score of your regard for my worth, and your respect to your uncle’s memory, I should scarcely accept it when accompanied with insult.” She was walking away towards the house.

“ Stop, for heaven’s sake, my dear girl,” said his Lordship, forcibly taking her hand, and grasping it too strongly for her to disengage it, then dropping on his knee, “ though you will kill me with a frown from those bewitching eyes, yet, on my knees, I swear, by all that is sacred, my whole soul is devoted to you. I have loved you from the first moment I saw you. Be but mine (would to heaven I could legally make you so !) in every thing but the name you shall be my wife. I will make any settlements on you. You shall live where you please. I will go abroad with you. Be mine—make me happy, and, by heaven, I will adore you to the last hour of my existence.”

“ Unhand me ! most base, most vile of men,” cried the enraged Augusta. “ Leave, me, my Lord, nor ever dare to approach me, and again insult me with your licentious conversation. The virtuous mind instinctively abhors the vicious. Mine, without sus-

pecting the poison in your insidious offer, rejected it from my soul: I feel it now as the intuitive motion of virtue, and feel a natural antipathy that reflection must hourly increase. Carry your infamous proposals where they may be welcome; Augusta Monckley's soul disdains you. I have a protector whom your arts cannot seduce, under whose powerful arm I am secure against all the wiles you can practise."

"The devil you have," thought Lord Glamore; "but I will circumvent all his precaution, and your's too, or I will give up my fame for seduction." He poured forth the most profuse and tender speeches, such as he had too often found efficacious in obtaining the fair victim's forgiveness; but here they were in vain, for Augusta darted down a walk, which gave her a short run to the house, where she flew to her chamber, and, locking herself in, her perturbed spirits began to subside, and a flood of tears came to her relief.

"Oh!" cried she, as she wiped her streaming eyes, "how many more gradations of sorrow am I doomed to experience? Surely the heart, unembittered by guilt, never felt more grief than now depresses mine. Merciful heaven! am I? Is Augusta the object of a vile and infamous passion? And has Lord Glamore dared openly to insult me with an avowal of sentiments that debased my ears and understanding? Oh, God! to what greater ills am I reserved? The Child of Providence! Alas! I am deserted—left a prey to licentious man, who hunts me to destruction!—Oh, my heavenly father!" she continued, "pardon the wild effusion of despair. Yes, I will put my trust in Thee, and never cease calling on thy name in the day

of my trouble. Shelter me from these evil men, or, if it be thy blessed will, shroud me in the tomb with my beloved friends! Oh, Henry! have I blamed thee! Pardon me, dear saint! Beloved friend of my youth, forgive thy penitent Augusta! Oh! that she could lay her weary head beside thee in the cold grave, to rise with thee in everlasting bliss, no more to be tormented and persecuted by the vile Lord Glamore!" Mortified, — ashamed, yet unreclaimed, did this pitiful peer follow Augusta to the house, where, in the parlour, he found his precious parasite lolling at his ease, reading, or rather turning over the leaves of a book.

"Why, my Lord, you look a little crest-fallen. What the devil has the little artful slut insisted on terms you cannot comply with?"

"Pshaw! d—n your nonsense; don't let me be tormented with your stupid remarks."

"Well, but my dear Lord, now do tell me, have you a prospect of success?"

"I have a prospect of the devil! And may the devil take me if I do not some how or other get her into my power. To be disdained from her soul! threatened, and bullied with her having a Protector! a powerful Protector, whose arm will secure her against my wiles! Oh! my pretty one, if it comes to that, I fancy my arm can hold a pistol as well as your friend: but who the devil can he be? I wish I may ever see him. She absolutely declares war against me, and talks of her auxiliaries; then I will resist force with force."

"But who the plague can this Protector be? Did she not name him? Perhaps, faith it may be so, she

means to apply to me for protection. She is a charming sensible girl: I saw that in her eyes, and, I dare say, she saw something she did not altogether dislike in mine."

"Yes, by the Lord, you would prove a pretty protector, truly; and one I should be much afraid of to be sure. No, she spoke with the utmost confidence of this friend. It is some one she is well acquainted with, no doubt."

"Oh! faith I have it now; pretty little piety in pattens. She has been brought up in the fear of the Lord," drawled out the Rev. Mr. Bellamy, "which you know 'is the beginning of wisdom,' and so she has cunningly frightened your Lordship with a rawhead and bloody-bones, and to be sure a miracle is to be worked to save this sweet lambkin from the rough embraces of the naughty wolf. The devil of a book could I find that is fit for a gentleman to read; all divinity, morality, and such petrifying stuff, by heavens!"

Even Lord Glamore was shocked by the impious sentiments of his chaplain, declaring, with an oath, "he was too bad." Thus were these two wretches conversing and strengthening the wickedness of each other's heart; while the innocent, but devoted, Augusta, was with unaffected piety, lifting up her soul in prayer to that Power, which alone she depended on for protection.

Lord Glamore was conscious he had given our heroine mortal offence, and unless he could some how deprecate her anger, he should stand but little chance of getting into her presence again, much less into her

fa-vour : but the favourite maxim of libertines, that inportunity and opportunity will overcome any virtue, was so strongly pleaded by Bellamy, that he was determined to make use of the first, in hopes of its procuring the second, which he was resolved to make the most advantage of, and to which he was still further stimulated by his friend sarcastically saying, his Lordship was now getting old, and it could not be expected that fine girls would fly into his arms as they had done twenty years since.

After dinner Lord Glamore called for writing implements, and in the evening Augusta was presented with the following epistle, the servant having directions not to wait a moment after he had delivered it :

“ Impressed with the deepest contrition for my very unguarded conduct this morning, I almost dread still farther incurring the indignation of Miss Monckley, by presuming to intreat her compassion and forgiveness for a wretch, who is undone by her fascinating beauty. Alas ! how miserable is my situation ! I have it not in my power to give the most angelic of women a proof of the extent of my adoration, without offending that delicacy at once so amiable in her, and so dear to my heart.

“ Oh ! my beloved Augusta, could I lay my title and fortune at your feet, my heart would bound with the most extatic joy to accompany them. But fatally united to another as I am, that temerity, nothing but madness, a reason overturned by the tenderest love, can ever excuse. But can you not pity the wretch which you yourself have made ? Or will

you obdurately see me expire at your feet, at the
your sacrifice and victim ?

“ Your anger, my lovely angel, would not allow
you to hear my petitions this morning. I had a plea
to urge ; but yet, one which my trembling hand will
now scarcely allow me to indite :—your situation with
regard to the late Mr. Monckley’s family, and your
situation in regard to the world :—believe me, my most
tenderly adored Augusta, my bosom is torn with the
severest anguish by the thought of giving you a mo-
mentary pain ; yet, when I reflect that you can make
me the most blessed of men, without bringing an
odium (which liberal minds despise) on my family,
it gives me some faint hopes, that preserve me from
absolute despair. Whose name will be injured ?
You have no relations to look cool upon you—no one
in the world to whom you are accountable, or who
should arrogantly dictate to you the road you ought
to take. Oh ! that you would, at your own time,
bless me with me your love ; and I swear, by the
eternal Being who made me, and sees the ardency
and purity of my passion, that the first moment I am
disengaged, either by death or divorce, from my un-
fortunate marriage, I will give you a legal power to
bear my name : in the mean time, I will accompany
you to any place you shall please on the Continent,
where you will be received and caressed as Lady
Glamore. I will bind myself by the strongest asseve-
rations to consider myself only as your tender friend,
till time, assiduity, and the fondest affection that ever
inhabited the breast of man, shall have erected a
wish in yourself to bless me for ever.

“ I intreat my beloved Miss Monckley to weigh the

role of this ; and I beseech you, if you would not hazard my eternal destruction (for to live without you, is impossible,) that you will give me such an answer, as will afford me the prospect of being happy in your society. We will leave England immediately. All countries with my adored Augusta will be a Paradise to me, as each place will be a hell unless I attain my angel.

“ Most devotedly your’s,

“ GLAMORE.”

This letter he had artfully contrived to send too late to receive an answer, even if Augusta had chosen to enter into a correspondence with him. Certainly the last thing in the world she meant to do, and yet she feared he would designedly misconstrue her silence, on so gross and premeditated an insult, as a tacit avowal of her concurrence with his wishes, or at least that her anger was, in some degree, appeased.

“ Ungenerous, unprincipled Lord Glamore !” she exclaimed, as she crushed the infamous scroll in her hand, and was just in the act of throwing it on the fire ; but recollecting herself time enough to save it from the flames, determined to return it to him under a blank cover : “ are my heavy and almost unparalleled misfortunes to be marshalled and set in array to induce me to degrade myself ? Have I no family, whose virtuous name would be injured by my infamy ? No one to whom I am accountable, or who should give me counsel ? And are those pleas for a destroyer ? Well, then, I stand alone in the world, without one natural, one acquired protector ! Myself

alone to answer for my actions ! Myself, alas ! alone to depend on ! All the honour of my shipwrecked family resides in my bosom. From whatever rank descended, I am the last, the only support ! Never shall its honour be sullied : I am all the world to myself. I may never gain the esteem of others. My own I will never lose : and what are the temptations that are offered me ? I blush for having even one moment felt a triumph in despising them."

Two days did Lord Glamore keep close in his castle, only sending out a few scouts now and then to reconnoitre the adversary's camp. Two tedious anxious days were they, for they brought no tender concessions, or even what would have answered his purpose nearly as well, no reproaches. From this persevering silence he could collect nothing. Often was the servant questioned, whether he was certain the letter had been delivered ? He constantly assured his Lordship, "he had given it into Martha's own hand, with half-a-guinea, and she promised faithfully Miss Monckley should have it."

A thousand conjectures haunted Lord Glamore day and night, sometimes soothed, sometimes irritated by the reflections of Bellamy ; but still the glorious effect of importunity prevailed, and a second letter was dispatched, containing, together with the tenderest effusions of "love and madness," a *carte blanche*, to be filled up by Augusta, signed "Glamore."

Our heroine, on finding the man did not wait, hardly gave herself time to read this flourishing epistle : however, she could not resist writing a line or two immediately over his Lordship's signature ; then folding up both the letters with the first note he

had written, she addressed the packet to the Earl of Glamore, and told David, whom she dispatched with it, to give it to the porter of the lodge, with her compliments to his Lord, and that that letter contained a full answer to those he had honoured her with.

What pleasure danced in his eyes, and pervaded every trembling finger, as he broke up the seal of a packet, from which, by the civil message, he deduced the most transporting expectations.

"A blank, my Lord," cried Bellamy, in the words of Viola, and in a threatrical tone.

"Hell and the devil!" exclaimed the disappointed and enraged Peer, as he turned over the contents, and saw only his own letters: "Oh! by the Lord, but here is something written by way of articles."

"What is it?" cried Lord Glamore, impatiently.

"Faith, you shall have it yourself, my Lord. You would cut my throat, if I should *cut* you up so confoundedly." Struck with astonishment, dismay, and despair, he saw written, in the hand of Augusta: "In consequence of being convinced, how much and deservedly I am despised and detested by Augusta Monckley, I here declare, by my sign manual, that I will never again molest or insult her with a repetition of my infamous passion or proposals ;

"GLAMORE."

It would stain the paper to repeat the virulence of execration which he poured out on this artful trick of Augusta, inflicting the bitterest curses on his head and soul if he was not revenged. Bellamy attempted to be witty on his Lordship's sanguine expectations; but seeing him too much galled to bear his flippant

impertinence, he wisely took himself off, lest his friend and patron should have given him the kicking he so richly deserved, and which he feared, from the frantic violence of the desperate lover, he should certainly have if he staid. It was some hours before he would venture to make his appearance, and then found Lord Glamore a little more composed, and almost ready to join in the laugh, which his signal defeat occasioned in the risible faculties of his associate; but he had formed another scheme, which he would not communicate to his friend, having more potent allies in London. As he had done all he could in this campaign, he resolved to draw off his forces, till he had collected such powers as would enable him to take the field.

CHAP. XIII.

VULGARITY AND SYMPATHY.

THE confirmation of some sense of shame in Lord Glamore, Augusta inferred, from having been told by David, that both he and Mr. Bellamy were seen in a post-chaise on the London road, accompanied by his Lordship's suite; she now could take the benefit of the fresh air by the sea-side, a pleasure she had not tasted a long time; first, from her attendance on her sick friend and recent losses, and lately on account of the apprehension of meeting with either Lord Glamore or Mr. Bellamy.

She was preparing for her walk, and yet her heart was fluttered and distressed by the sad thoughts, which would naturally occur on first visiting her favourite rock; a view of which, even in her happiest days, made her pensive, and now would fill her soul with a thousand tender reflections of happiness, for ever lost. Just as she had got from the garden-gate, and reached the lane, which led from the public road, she saw a thick-set, short, vulgar-looking man on horse-back; a rusty crape round his hat, and under a coarse great coat, a sort of dark fustian dress, with black horn buttons. — “Halloo! Miss, or young woman, whatever you be, can you tell me if yon house be parson Monckley’s, he that died lately?”

“Good God! Sir,” answered Augusta, “can you be the brother of Mr. Monckley?”

“Am I? Why, yes, to be sure, I am no less a man than brother to parson Monckley, and I wants to know, if so be that is his house?”

“I will attend you thither directly,” replied Augusta, pale and trembling at the prospect of receiving so strange a looking character.

“Mayhap,” cries he, “you be Miss—what’s her new-fangled name—that brother picked up, a little squalling brat, by the sea-side, and was to have married Henry, if he had not killed himself galloping after foxes?”

“Oh, Sir!” cried Augusta, “indeed you are mistaken,” and the tears gushing from her eyes, she could not proceed, or she would have explained by what an unhappy accident poor Henry had lost his life. He, however, supposed the mistake was, taking her for Augusta.—“Well, well, I may be mistaken,

mayhap, all's one for that; but by your piping, one would think you were a bit of a sweet-heart too: but never mind, such a pretty girl need not wait long for suitors. Do you live here-about?"

"I thought you had understood, Sir, that my name is Augusta Monckley?"

"Why, look you there now; why, you made as if I had mistook, or told a lie. Well then, my little Gusty, will you tell some one to take my horse, and my saddle bags, and let me have somewhat to eat, for I am main hungry, almost clammed and famished."

She left him at the parlour door, to order some refreshments, and then, with an aching heart, returned to give him that reception, she hoped the brother of her dear Mr. Monckley would have deserved.

"Well, my girl," said he, with an impertinent familiarity, "you got my letter? I hopes you have observed the contents, and not been extravagant in laying out my money, for it is all mine you mark, now."

"Ever to be deplored, the means by which it became so!" ejaculated Augusta.

"Hey? What do you say? Egad I don't understand you." Augusta handed him a plate of sand wiches.

"Pooh, pox! what are these snips and snacks for? A man might cram the whole parcel into his hollow tooth. Let's have the dish."

"I feared you would spoil your dinner."

"Why, bellyfull is a bellyful, an't it? What signifies if it be at twelve or three. I suppose, as brother was a parson and a gentleman, he could not dine before three?"

Augusta felt herself unable to converse with such a being ; under pretence of making some addition to the dinner, she left the room ; but he sent a whoop and shout after her, telling her “ to mind that his bed was well aired, for as he was just come into possession of his estate, he had no inclination to be bumboozled out of it, and sent out of the world by damp sheets ; and get another bed ready too, for I expect a friend, perhaps to-night, or to-morrow at farthest.”

“ Surely,” thought Augusta, “ the world cannot produce a counterpart to so gross a mortal !” After having given all proper directions for this increase of family, Augusta went to her own room, filled with disgust at the coarse manners of Mr. Benjamin Monckley, and more than shocked at his brutal indifference for the loss of his brother and nephew ; and yet her grief for their deaths was not of a kind to admit of consoling by participation. None had loved them as she had, and no one could by any language suit their expressions to her sentiments. Though they were never one moment from her thoughts, yet she did not wish to hear their names uttered by any one. Her own ideas alone could do them justice in her own mind, and that sort of lamentation, which others might have thought soothing, was to her painful to listen to. How much worse to have them spoken of disrespectfully by a hardened insensible wretch, who stood in so near a relationship to them ? But, as he observed in his letter, “ her loss was his gain,” and she prepared herself to meet him at dinner, as a man whose interest was his god, and too ignorant either to feel the contempt which he inspired, or to be reclaimed into decency, by seeing the effect of it.

His conversation, if the term is not debased by being the vehicle of all that is vulgar, was at dinner even more disagreeable than before. He would have a pipe, and choaked her with his fumigations. She begged to be permitted to quit the room; but from a churlish, selfish, ill-nature, he "insisted on her keeping her seat, and not giving herself the airs of a fine lady. Surely, he might do as he pleased in his own house."

"That point is disputed," said she, being forced to say something, to avoid the imputation of being damned crusty and sulky, as he had politely said she was: "for but a few days since Mr. Bellamy, who is appointed to the rectory, hinted, in pretty strong terms, that he should be glad to have the house cleared of the furniture, as he wanted to send in some workmen,"

"He may kiss ———; I beg your pardon, Miss, I did but just stop in time; but I don't care a farthing for him. What the devil, there is no end to parsons — one down — another up — but, please the pigs, I won't budge till I chuse, for all the parsons — aye and more too, than ever went to heaven. I only wants to see the will; settle all the debts, for I suppose I shall find enough of them."

"The domestic concerns, Sir," said Augusta, "were conducted with too much regularity to have debts. It was an invariable custom to pay every thing weekly, which, in the short time they have unhappily devolved on me, has been continued."

"Aye and a good scheme too: 'out of debt, out of danger,' that's my maxim, all the world over." And then he began to make an estimate of what the furni-

ture would fetch : "though I will be hanged if I shall get one half their worth. There is that music thing, I dare say that cost two-pence at least."

"I never heard what it cost," cried Augusta, heartily piqued, "nor ever hope to know how much it will sell for. It was a present to me from Mr. Malvern, and I shall preserve it till I want bread."

"Oh, egad! you need not be so uppish, Miss. You may be glad enough to get a good chap for it, as well as for your baby-face."

"No, Sir," she replied, with spirit, "I shall scarcely be reduced so low. What my beloved friend has left me will secure me from mean actions, or mean companions."

"Why, pray, my young lady," affectedly bowing, and taking off his hat for the first time, "what may your beloved friend have left you, do you think? I suppose you have taken care to feather your nest?"

"When you see the will you will be answered," replied she, leaving the room in visible displeasure, which she could no longer restrain; nor would she, as he declined such wishey-washey slop, as he called tea, come into the parlour any more that evening. She passed most of the night in forming some plan for the future, her mind being too much agitated for dwelling on the almost constant theme of her former meditations: however, she did not think herself bound by any ties to submit to the low and vulgar Mr. Benjamin, and was resolved, if possible, to be mistress of her own time, as well as actions.

Mr. Benjamin waited with great inquietude for the arrival of his friend, who was one of the limbs of the law, who, together with the exciseman of the dis-

strict where he lived, were his principal associates. They used to meet alternately at his house, or at a publican's in the same village, where their chief enjoyment was to abuse the ministry, the clergy and landholders, or gentlemen. A specimen of their amusements, and edifying conversation, Augusta had at the next day's dinner, as, about ten minutes before it was served, this friend of Mr. Benjamin's made his *entrée*.

He was a pert, little pimple-nosed fellow, of about four feet and a half. His protuberant neckcloth, over a bustler, almost concealed his picked chin; a small round hat, put very bewitchingly, as he thought, on one side, with his hair cropped, after the fashion he had taken from a recruiting ensign; a blue coat, cut to the quick, and lined with buff, to shew the only wretched principle by which he was governed; a waistcoat of the last, and immense high buckskins, with well lacquered boots, mad up the exterior of this jessamy, strip of parchment. Eager and rough was the salutation bestowed on his friend, the lawyer, by Mr. Benjamin. A hearty shake of the hand, with an oath, by way of grace, the lawyer returned—"By my soul, a devilish fine girl, Ben; won't you introduce me?"

"Aye, why, I believe I should.—Here, Miss, is as honest a fellow as ever scribbled on paper, my friend, Mr. Peter Popkins, and to say that of a lawyer, eh, Peter? is saying a great deal. This, Sir, is Miss Gusty Monckley, though how the plague she came by the name, I know not."

With the most familiar air this vulgar coxcomb brushed up to Augusta, to take a kiss. She drew

jack, as if a serpent had crossed her path, and saved her lips, or even cheek, from being defiled from his unhallowed touch.

The man of the law, in spite of his natural bronze, absolutely blushed from the repulsive air our heroine assumed. He sat himself down, and consoled himself by devouring almost every thing that was set before him.

“Egad, lawyer,” said his friend Ben, “do you know I am likely to be turned out of the house by the rascally parson that has the living? Miss says as he wants to come in. I shall not trouble him long with my company, but, by G—d, I will not go one jot sooner to please him than I have a mind. D—n all the parsons, say I. I wonder what the devil they were made for: I see no use they are of. There is that preaching blockhead of our’s.”

“Nay, Ben, you do not much care for him; I think you go as seldom to church as I, or Bob the exciseman.”

“No; but did you hear how the rascald served me? Last summer that ever was, some old maidish people in the parish, desired he would pray for rain, because forsooth we had had a long drowth; so he, to be sure, must fall to praying, and sure enough we had a fine souse for several days.”

“You must then have an opinion of the efficacy of his prayers, however,” said Augusta.

“He be hanged, with his prayers at his tail: I did not want rain; my lands lay low, and if it had not been for him, I should have had the only good crops in the village. God! it would have been the making of me; but he is one of the minister’s jacks in an

office, and he knows I hate the Pittites, and so he did it on purpose to spite me. I wonder, for my part, what good either parsons or gentlemen ever did to the nation. I hate the whole kit of them from my soul; a parcel of proud high-priests, and a set of fellows that think of nothing but preserving the game. Ah! the world is come to a fine pass, truly; Why, the bottle is out. Miss, have you got any more wine in the cellar? It is devilish good stuff, lawyer. Trust the parsons for knowing what is best." A fresh bottle came in, and the pipes were called for. Augusta was quitting the room.

"Sha'n't stir, by my say," cried Mr. Benjamin; "I have a proposal to make you: here is Peter Popkins, a fine young fellow, and a bachelor. Now I know, as the song says, 'When once a girl has got a sweat-heart in her head, she never will be easy without one,' and I don't know a cleverer man for your purpose than Peter."

"I beg, Sir, you will allow me to quit the room," cried Augusta, striving to disengage her hand from the rude grasp of Mr. Benjamin.

"Oh, faith! faith! you are too violent, Ben. Let the young Lady and I have a little private confab first. You pop the question in too much of a hurry. Pshaw, Ben, faith you distress her," adding in a low voice, "My dear Ma'am, Ben is more than half-primed already. I will steal from him, and have the pleasure of taking a walk with you presently."

"I am engaged, Sir, the whole evening, I cannot walk with you; I am disordered and distress."

"Indeed it is enough to dash any young Lady. You perceive, my dear Ma'am, my friend does not

know much of the world ; but give me leave to assure you, I think you a charming creature, and all that sort of thing, and if you will allow me to attend you, you will find me a very different sort of man, I do assure you."

Augusta broke from the hand of Benjamin, and never thought of thanking Mr Peter Popkins for his gallantry ; but making her escape into the garden, went out that way to the Beach, fully resolved she would not remain long under the roof with such wretches.

Her indignation at having been treated with such gross familiarity, kept up such a kind of false strength of spirit in her, as made her for a time insensible of the misfortunes that had exposed her to it, her whole thoughts turning on the plan she had formed to leave the house, if possible, the next day. With her mind thus fully engaged, she walked mechanically to the Beach, and then the view of the sea, where her misfortunes first commenced, the rock where the relation of her early history was first disclosed, and where her beloved benefactor had narrated his own, all rushed at one moment on her agitated memory. Her limbs tottered—her head grew giddy—and she sat, or rather threw herself on the rock, giving way to the most violent sorrow. It was a beautiful calm evening, in the beginning of April. All around was quiet and serene, except the bosom of poor Augusta, that heaved with heart-rending sighs, and her actions kept pace with the perturbations of her mind. Sometimes she rose, and walked hastily along the Beach — then would resume her situation. No place could give her ease or rest. — "Yes," cried she aloud, after

having mused for a long time—"Yes, I will leave the house. Alas! and whither shall I go? Oh! thou cruel ocean," bending herself forward, as she sat, "all my misfortunes do I owe to thee! How deceitful is the calm with which thy waves gently undulate! Oh, wretched Augusta! why art thou left alone in the world to mourn the heaviest griefs that ever pierced a human heart? Oh, my God!" she continued, clasping her hands, and throwing up her face all bathed with tears, "why was I preserved in infancy to experience such unparalleled ill-fortune? Oh! that I had joined my lost parents, or had not survived my late distresses! Oh! my beloved benefactor—Oh! my dear Henry, why am I not enclosed in the cold tomb with you? Why may I not end my sorrows and my life together? Oh! that I dared to put a period to an existence, doomed to be wretched for ever!"—At that moment, hardly knowing what she did, she started on her feet, and, at the same moment, she heard a voice in terror, but yet gentle, exclaim, "Oh, stop! for the sake of heaven, stop!" The alarm that seized her, on hearing an exclamation in a strange voice, had nearly precipitated her over the crag of the rock where she stood, had not the person, who called out, sprung forward with agility, and caught hold of her. Finding herself enclosed in a man's arms, she gave a shriek, and instantly became insensible. The stranger, terrified at her situation, bore her, still fainting, to the turf on the top of the cliff. He supported her as he knelt on one knee, and kept fanning her with his hat, in hopes she would revive. What a situation for a young man! Never had he seen so lovely a creature! He had stood at a

distance for some time, yet near enough to over-hear her pathetic complaints. From the first moment he had seen her, he felt compassion, sympathy, and every tender, generous sentiment, interesting his heart in favour of so charming an object! Her dress, as well as figure, had attracted his notice, and added to his admiration! She was habited in a black bombazeen great coat. Her hands, which were beautiful both in form and colour, were without gloves. A small black beaver hat, simply ornamented with a plain crape band, that had now fallen off, and her lovely light-brown hair strayed in irregular ringlets over her beautiful forehead, and falling on one side of her white throat! The stranger gazed on her with agony, and would have given worlds to have had some means of restoring her senses. At last the lovely girl opened her eyes, and discovering her situation, begged the stranger would leave her, and accept her thanks for affording so much assistance.

“I cannot leave you, Madam,” cried he, “till I see you more recovered. Permit me to place you on this bank. Alas! my precipitate zeal might have been fatal to you! But the melancholy expressions you used, and your sudden rising, threw me into so much terror, that I had not command over my senses. The effect it has had on you,” he continued, with the most impressive tone of voice, “will never quit my memory. Good God,” he added, “what can have been the sufferings of so young, so amiable a creature, to draw forth such heart-wounding complaints? Oh! that it was in my power to soften, if not entirely remove them!” The tremor of his voice, his eyes moistened with tears, and the tender earnestness

of his expressions proving that they really came from a benevolent heart, lost not their effect upon Augusta. It was a sympathy which soothed, though it could not assuage her grief. She gave herself up to it, and covering her face with her handkerchief, sobbed as if her heart would burst by its own agitation. The stranger would not interrupt her tears, from the hope that she would be relieved by a free indulgence. As he stood leaning over her, the humanity of his nature evinced itself, by the sighs which escaped from his bosom, and some straggling drops that fell from his eyes. The piercing accent of her voice, broken by the sobs which accompanied her tears, sunk deeper in his heart than the charms of any woman he had ever known, with an earnestness in which every sentiment she inspired took a share, he repeated his entreaties to be informed how he could be serviceable to her.

“Pray, Sir, leave me,” she said, “my griefs are past redress: I shall soon recover. I am distressed for having given this trouble and concern to a stranger. I beg you will leave me. Indeed, I am much better now.”

“A stranger!” repeated he, emphatically. “Oh! why am a stranger? Why had I not the happiness of being sooner known to you? How unfortunate am I, that even this solicitude may be deemed impertinent and intrusive! But if you could view my heart, I trust, you would discover more honourable sentiments than an officious curiosity could give rise to. To see such an object, such a woman in distress, what must the man be who would not give up his life to remove it? Oh! that I was so fortunate, so favored a

being ! Would to God I was your brother, even your brother, that I might have a right to offer, and a claim to protect you ! Never did I see such sweetness ! Never was my heart so strongly interested !”

“ Oh !” cried Augusta, “ that I had a brother ! but alas ! I am alone in the world, unconnected, unfriended, unprotected.” She arose, and again returning the acknowledgments she thought due, and could not wish to restrain, to the amiable and sympathizing stranger, prepared to return home.

“ And will you not allow me to support you as you walk ?” he asked. “ Will you drive me from you, before you have recovered the agitation your spirits have sustained ? I will not presume on such an indulgence. Only permit me to attend you to some place of safety : I then will instantly quit you. But, indeed, I should be wretched to leave you alone ; you may relapse ; you may meet some rude persons. — Sweetest of women, do not forbid my attendance, at least till you get near your home ; and then I hope, when you are better acquainted with my character, you will allow me sometimes to see a woman who has interested every noble feeling of the heart, more than any one I ever beheld.”

“ That your heart possesses humanity and gentleness,” said Augusta, “ I have fully proved, and I should be ungrateful not to accept services offered on such just principles. I have not far to walk, but will not refuse your company.” With the utmost respectfulness he gently drew her arm within his ; yet, although she suffered him to do so, he did not even press it to his side, or make the least advance to a greater familiarity, than if she had been his sister or

mother. The extreme delicacy of his behaviour had the most marked effect on Augusta. It was a sentiment congenial to her own. She felt more tranquilized than she had ever done since her late distress and loss. There seemed a sympathy between these two, who were perfect strangers to each other, that soothed her bosom to a peace she had hardly ever known. His voice was so soft, his manners so gentle, and his figure so perfectly accorded with each, that not to have allowed that he was of an order of superior beings to those she had ever been acquainted with, would have argued a total insensibility in our heroine. His conversation, refined and elegant, seemed calculated rather to amuse and divert her attention from the objects that occasioned her grief, than by any leading question of her situation to recal it to her memory. She felt grateful to him for so well-judged a propriety of conduct, and he seemed more than satisfied by the complacency with which she listened to his discourse. They were almost within sight of the rectory, when Augusta saw Martha running, out of breath, without hat or cloak, and her cap flying off her head.

“Oh, laws! Ma’am, I am glad I have found you: I never was in such a quandary in my life. Oh, laws! here is the deuce to pay; but never mind, you be safe. Mercy! when I could not see you in the garden, nor in never a room in the house, I thought, perhaps, that wicked Lord had run away with you.”

“Lord! what Lord,” exclaimed the stranger, “ran away with your lady? I——.”

“Why, that same wicked Lord Glamore, and be hanged to him.”

“Lord Glamore !” he repeated with astonishment.

“Aye, as sure as you are alive, Miss Augusta ; that Lord Glamore is as much of a devil, as if he had a cloven foot. There’s our David says as how he heard one of the grooms say, it does not argufy her coyness, for, by G—d, my Lord will have her at last. I am sure, when I heard it, my hair stood up as it were. Oh ! hang his sly ways.”

“I hope there is no such danger,” said Augusta : “however, I must be more on my guard.” The stranger spoke not a word. He had let the arm of Augusta fall from his, and did not seem as if he thought of resuming it. They insensibly walked farther from each other. His arms were folded, and his eyes bent on the ground, till roused by what Martha said further.—“Well, but that is not all the matter neither ; there’s a fine coil within doors ; such a commence ! Old Mr. Benjamin swearing, and storming such a size—i’faith I believe he is no better than an old rogue. The lawyer is the honestest of the two, and not much to boast neither, I dare say. I could not help listening at the door, and there they had got the will of my poor master ; and the old cunning fox said as how he did’nt think the will mattered a straw, for he was rightful heir ; and I believes he was going to put it in the fire, for the lawyer d—d him for a fool, and told him as how he would be hanged for destroying it, and that he might see that there was a copy in parson Bendley’s hands ; and then he said, (the old fellow I means) that he did not know what his foolish brother meant by leaving so much money out of the family to a stranger ; and then he made use of such bad words of you, Ma’am,

that I was fit to go in, and tear his eyes out ; and then the lawyer said as how he should like to marry you of all things. Then Mr. Benjamin called for more wine, and seeing you had the key of the cellar I could not get him none, so he fell to storming and raving like mad, and swore he would turn you out of the house, and so I run'd so hard as I could to seek you."

"Oh, my God!" cried Augusta, "what will become of me? How can I return to such a wretch? How am I beset with evil, on whichever side I view my deplorable situation?"

"Who is this wretch?" asked the stranger, with great emotion. "Has he any power—any authority over you? Oh, God! why must I still have to lament that I am not entitled to offer you my protection, yet I may my assistance? Oh! for heaven's sake, forget that I am unknown to you, and such is my wayward fate, that it is better I should be unknown, yet, yet, I may be of some service. Oh, God! I cannot stand those tears." He turned hastily from her, but instantly recovering the tone of his voice: "tell me who is this wretch. Are you bound to him by any ties of duty?"

"Oh! no, thank heaven," said the weeping Augusta: "I have nothing to do with him. His brutality is but the least of my concern. I will stay no longer than this night under his roof. He is the brother of my dearest friend, my father, my benefactor! But, oh! how unlike to him!"

"Aye, as unlike as chalk and cheese," cried Martha. "Thank God, I never seed the fellow of this in my born days. I'm sure I'll not stay to be used like a nigger or a horse. He called me every

thing from a pig to a dog, because I could not get him some more wine."

"Oh! then run, Martha, with the key; I will not see him I am resolved. Pray, good Martha, make all the haste you can. I will go in at the garden door, and so get up to my chamber. I would not now encounter his brutal fury for the universe."

"And must I leave you exposed to the chance of having this brutal monster, perhaps, bursting into your room, and terrifying you with his menaces?"

"Indeed I have no apprehension of personal abuse from him. I shall lock my door, and to-morrow, if I live, I will quit the house."

"And is there no one to whom you can apply to have justice done you? Your servant said he talked of destroying a will. He must be a most iniquitous wretch, very improper to have so young and lovely a creature in his power."

"Your solicitude, Sir, is very flattering to me."

"Would to God I could prove its sincerity," said he.

"I believe it sincere," she replied, "because it must be wholly disinterested; but circumstanced as I unfortunately am, your good and generous intentions are all I can accept. I shall ever remember, with the strongest sense of gratitude, that in a moment of deep and almost desponding distress, I met with one sympathizing heart."—Her voice trembled as she uttered the last three words. She had reached the garden-gate. "Adieu! Sir," she said, with more steadiness. "Accept my best thanks. I need not wish you happy. Such a mind as your's must deserve to be so." She waited not for a reply; but hurrying

through the gate, shut it with visible emotion, and left the stranger, standing fixedly gazing on it, as if it had disjoined him from all he loved on earth.

He remained there a considerable time, undetermined whether he should quit the spot, or whether he should not go to the house, that he might be in the way to redress or prevent any insult being offered to a woman in whom he found himself so powerfully interested. He feared assuming the character of an officious fellow, and yet her situation appeared so extremely critical, that he was almost induced to hazard any thing rather than leave her in danger. He walked slowly many times before the front of the house. At last he had the felicity of beholding the object of his inquietude walking about a room in the one pair of stairs apartment, and that she had a light. He derived great comfort from this circumstance, although he sighed when he saw her wipe her eyes, and beheld the traces of grief which yet remained on her lovely face.

“Amiable, sweetest of women!” said he, internally, “didst thou wish me happy? Alas! I fear, such is my destiny, that I shall be very much the reverse. How strange is the human heart, that it should thus assimilate in one moment towards another; and how little credit have I ever given to the idea of love at first sight, yet what is this I feel for that charming unknown girl, if it is not love, combined too with the tenderest sentiments of pity, compassion and respect? Oh, heavens! and is such an innocent, lovely young creature the object of a base, dishonourable, *doubly* dishonourable, passion? Is he not married? Is he not? No matter what he is: from the

innate principles of honour I ought to protect her ; and he ought, and perhaps will, one time or other, thank the man who has saved Augusta from ruin !” Such were his ruminations as he strayed towards the house, where he meant to pass the night, and where he had only arrived at dinner. The coming of this young man had been accidental. He had been but two or three days in England, and thus far we may lift up the curtain, (as by his exclamation we may learn he knew such a man as Lord Glamore,) that to meet that nobleman, who he expected was still at Malvern Park, was the sole occasion of his travelling across the country from Dover, where he had landed. From Malvern Park he had walked to the Beach, and to Malvern Park he returned when he had retired from the view of the Rectory, and offered up his prayers for the restoration of happiness to an amiable woman, whom he was convinced would ever be dear to him.

The impression was as deep as sudden : the thoughts of her never left him during the night, for if a short sleep stole upon his weary eye-lids, still her image was before him, still she lived in his imagination, and pervaded all his ideas.

CHAP. XIV.

A REMOVAL.

THE earnest assurances of assistance and protection which the young stranger had offered Augusta, operated more in her favour than she had had an idea of.

How they had operated on her mind will be seen hereafter: but while Martha waited at supper, as she was pre-determined to go when her lady did, she would not stand still like a nidget, as she said, and be bullied at by Mr. Benjamin. "I tells you, Sir, once for all," said she, "that I does not look on myself as your sarvant, nor would I stay in your house for the Inges, that I would not. I have lived girl and woman above a score of years with my dear old master, who is in heaven, and knows what I say to be true; and I never was the sarvant that had a hash word of him in my life; but he was a gentleman every inch of un: and as for poor Miss Augusta she meets with friends every where; and she deserves to do the like, for if there is an angel on yearth, she is one of them, let the next come from where it may; and I believe she has met with her match, for I never seed such a sweet young gentleman in my days, as she was wawking with this blessed evening. He might be the Prince of Wales for his genteelness: and he swore—no, he didn't make use of bad words neither; —but he said as he would purtect her, and see her righted from a wicked set of wretches, who seems to have neither the fear of God in their hearts, nor of the devil, God forgive me! in the consance. He'll take care as wills sha'n't be put in the fire; and now I have said my say, you may purvide yourself as soon as you please, for, if my name be Martha Bowers, I will be off to-morrow morning." So taking away the things with a saucy indifference, and banging the door after her as she went out, she left the farmer and the lawyer to digest their supper with the desert she had given them. The mention of a man of rank, for they had

given that credit to the assertion of Martha, made them both retire to their own thoughts for counsel, and they each remained silent for some time.

"Surely," cried Benjamin, "that d—d jade, Martha, did not overhear what I said about the will?"

"I hope not for your sake, Ben; but if she did, she likewise heard me dissuade you; so my neck is out of the halter, however: but who the devil is this gentleman she talks of?"

"Some lawyer, I suppose, of Augusta's."

"Then, faith, I shall be jockeyed. Upon my soul she is a charming girl, if she was not so hellish proud, and, notwithstanding I am not a marrying man, d—n me, if I think the finest woman in the universe could secure me to herself; and two thousand pounds is not a great catch, yet I could find some amusement, for the honeymoon at least, with so fine a creature."

"I tell you, Ben, your cursed vulgar ways has done me much mischief. You should have let me alone to manage. If I had had an opportunity of making love to her, after my own fashion, and a devilish successful fashion I have found it, I should have carried the business through at once."

"Well then, my hearty, let us drink success to your fashion. I had rather you had the two thousand pounds than any man beside, not bating the Prince of Wales. — Oh! d—n me, I love the Prince of Wales, he is a hearty cock, and one of us. Come, drink his health — drink his health, my little Pop, and d—n all the tories. No day-light, you dog; up with it over the brim."

Augusta had passed great part of the time she had been above stairs, in making an inventory of what

immediately belonged to herself, which, indeed, was easily done, for it comprised only some books, the grand pianoforte, with the music, both printed and manuscript, her wearing apparel, and her box of treasure. She then wrote a note to Mr. Bendley, requesting the favour of seeing him immediately, to settle every thing for her with Mr. Benjamin Monckley, and, ringing the bell, gave charge to Martha to send David off by break of day, took a bit of bread, and a glass of water, and then prepared to go to bed, being much fatigued by the events of the day; but, though fatigued, she could not compose herself to sleep. Still she thought she had left something unsettled; perhaps it was, that she had not written a few lines to Mr. Benjamin. No, that was not it, neither, for she had resolved to wait till she had heard the determination of Mr. Bendley. She could not recollect what it was, but the disturbance it had given her, banished sleep. She tried to harmonize her mind by reading. She rose from bed to get a book, and lighted her candle. The leaves were rapidly turned over. She could not find a subject that engaged her attention.—“My mind is quite deranged,” said she, softly; “and who can wonder at it? Such misfortunes as I have to deplore, might overturn the brain of a philosopher.” She had now got a chain, and she regularly pursued it to the last link, and there it stopped of itself. She tried to retrace the ideas, but, with an inconceivable velocity, still they returned to the same point. She tried to recollect the repeated tender-nesses of Henry; but the sweetness of voice, the delicacy, yet not less impressive attention, of the young stranger, would always, in one shape or other,

obtrude themselves on her recollection. She tried not to think of him, and yet she knew not why she should wish to forget him. "I know not who he is; I may never see him again. Well, then, I shall of course think no more of him: but it is a comfort, at least to me, who am fatally deprived of every friend, to have some one, though but a stranger, wish me well. I ought, out of gratitude, to wish him all happiness, for who knows, in the frenzy and despair with which I was seized, and from which his attention rescued me, if the powers of melancholy might not have possessed my seat of reason and religion, and I had been lost for ever? Yes, my gratitude binds me to think of my deliverer." Her mind then took a devout turn, and she preferred her petitions to heaven, with the most exalted fervour, growing more composed, she resigned herself to sleep, and most likely saw her hero in her dreams.

She took her breakfast in her own room. Her reserve and absence were severe strokes on Mr. Benjamin and his friend, particularly the latter, as he had been framing a prodigious fine compliment, which being cut and dried for the morning repast, could not serve for any other part of the day. It will be a great loss to the wittlings that we are not able to give it to them. No doubt it would have stood them in great stead in time of need, or similar circumstances.

Augusta came not from her chamber till the arrival of Mr. Bendley, and then had the comfort of a quarter of an hour's discourse with him before he saw Mr. Benjamin. The farmer equally hated and feared parsons, and the exterior of Mr. Bendley being that of a gentleman, made him doubly the object of those

amiable sentiments in the bosom of Benjamin. He met him with a sneaking air, conscious of the despicable light he must appear in, if he had heard of his behaviour, and not doubting but Martha had reported him in his true character. While Mr. Bendley and he were settling every thing, and the former insisting, though contrary to Augusta's wish or intentions, that even her mourning expences should be defrayed, and every article cleared, she went to walk, for the last time, in the rectory garden. A thousand fond recollections burst on her mind. It had been the scene of her infant playfulness; it had witnessed all her joys, and almost all her sorrows. There is something, too, inexpressibly interesting in seeing any thing for the last time, particularly an object endeared to our memory and affection by habit. She visited each plant and shrub which had grown up with her, as if they had been some loved acquaintance whom she was to behold no more. Her eyes flowed over them, and a pensive sorrow seized upon her heart. On one side of the garden was an elevated terrace, which commanded a view of the sea and cliff, whither she went, and seated herself in a little alcove, and turned her tearful eye on the beach. In a few minutes her reverie was disturbed by the pert Mr. Peter Popkins. —“A good morning to you, Ma'am; a sweet pleasant day, and these agreeable little April showers make it quite delightful.”

“Yes, Sir,” answered she, coldly.

“Yes, we shall have May flowers presently. You are fond of flowers, Ma'am; give me leave to make an addition to your nosegay.”

“I do not chuse any others, I thank you.”

“ Why, Ma’am, as you observe, it is quite my taste not to have too large, a *boket* I think is the fashionable word. But, my dear Ma’am, I am quiet *dizzi-pore*, as the French say. I hear we are going to lose you ? Lord ! how shall we exist when you are gone ? For my part, I think there is no pleasure in life without the company of you ladies : as the poet says, we are quite ‘brutes without you.’ I own my weakness ; I devote myself to the fair sex, and am rather happy in their good graces.”

“ Pray, Sir,” said Augusta, with a look of the utmost haughtiness, “ do you conceive you are entertaining me all this time ? If you do, allow me to convince you of your mistake.”

“ I own my fault, my dear Ma’am ; I have, indeed, been a general lover ; but such charms as your’s would fix me for ever.”

“ Incurrible ignorance and stupidity !” cried she, rising up in anger.

“ Not so, neither,” answered he, with a most impertinent sneer : “ not such a green-horn as you may suppose. Oh, oh ! I begin to smell a rat ; I see how the wind sets. To be sure you do not see yonder spark on horse-back ; and so you want to get rid of me that he may entertain you.” — Augusta plainly discovered the young stranger riding on the beach. Her eyes seemed to dart forward, to get a clearer view.

“ Pray, Ma’am, isn’t that gentleman very like the Prince of Wales ?”

“ No, I believe not ; I never saw the Prince of Wales.”

“ Why, no, by his picture he must be larger and taller too than your friend.”

“What friend? Whom are you talking of?”

“Why, the sweet gentleman you was walking with last night. You make believe you do not recollect him. He has been riding by the house for the last hour to my certain knowledge. I had a great mind to ask him what was his business.”

“I hope he would have answered you, then, by giving you, what you so richly would have deserved, a horsewhip.”

“I wish he had dared; I would have taught him to make an assault on a limb of the law, d—n me!”

“I wish, Sir, you would do me the favour of leaving me: I am not disposed to enjoy company.”

“I know you wish to meet the Prince.”

“Ridiculous man! what do you mean by the Prince?”

“Why, faith, we had a cursed good joke last night about the Prince of Wales, and I cannot help laughing at it, because that handsome fellow reminds me of it.”

“The gentleman is exceeding happy to afford you such mirth.”

“Nay, I don’t know what he may be; but, by Martha’s account, he must be a Prince in disguise, at least. Lord! may be it’s the Royal Sailor. Plymouth is not so far from hence. Was you ever at Plymouth, Ma’am?”

“No, Sir.”

“Then you have a fine sight to come. I dare say there will be a review of the ships this summer. We must have a raree show to divert the King after his confinement. If you are in this part of the country I should like to take you there.”

“Me! No; I think that is not likely to happen.”

“What is not likely to happen?”

“I know not: I do not know what you are saying. I beg the favour of you to leave me. I cannot see what plea you can have to torment me with your impertinence.” Her anger was still more raised, by seeing the stranger turn his horse toward the garden wall, as if he had discovered her. She walked hastily from the alcove.

“Aye, aye, now you are happy: you are going to meet your sweetheart, I suppose. Well, well, I will not spoil sport efaith;” and then he gave a Tally-O! Augusta, enraged and vexed, hurried down the slope of the terrace, and run into the house, while the impudent Popkins vociferously hallooed after her, as if in full cry with the hounds. Augusta saw no more of the stranger. Soon after the chaise, she had requested Mr. Bendley to order, came to the door.

Luckily for the agitation of her spirits, she escaped the unpleasant circumstance of taking leave of Mr. Benjamin. He had gone out to walk on the beach; Augusta therefore only wrote a line, to wish him his health, &c.

Martha had made herself ready to accompany her mistress, and, as had been previously settled in the morning, orders were given to have all the property of Augusta sent to the house of farmer Hodson, till she could suit herself with a residence. For the present she was to go to a sister of his, who was married to a farmer, and lived about fifteen miles from Malvern, where herself and Martha could be accommodated with board and lodging at an easy expence. Mr. Bendley was of the party in the chaise.

He told her "he had had a difficult task to make Mr. Benjamin act like an honest man; but nothing but the work of regeneration could make a generous, or commonly liberal one: that he wanted to have it appear, that Augusta's legacy was not to be paid till she came of age; nor till he was threatened by the terrors of law, and told how well it would sound in court, that the executor had actually meditated the destruction of the will, could he bring him to terms. It was now settled that it should be paid in one year from the death of the testator, which would be an advantage to her of a year and half's possession. He assured her likewise of his readiness to assist her with his advice whenever she would honour him with requesting it." Heaved a sigh when he attempted an "apology for not inviting her to reside with him; but most sincerely, and even paternally wished her all happiness." Augusta could not part from him without shedding many tears. He was one of the first of her friends; and when she saw him depart, she seemed to lose them all afresh.

But as human life, though chequered with evil, is not designed to be passed in constant bewailings, Augusta employed the evening in arranging the baggage she had brought with her, and ornamenting her room, by putting up some of her drawings, which had been framed and glazed. She had a parlour and chamber to herself, and a small room within for the reception of Martha, who declared she would never quit her, or accept of any *wages*, till her mistress came to the possession of her fortune. That was an affair which Augusta chose to regulate according to her own mode; but she was much pleased with the attach-

ment of honest Martha, whom she was resolved to support in every exigency. As to old David and the cook, they had agreed to finish their lives together, and had taken a small farm in the neighbourhood of Malvern.

Mr. and Mrs. Williams were plain good sort of people, in a very respectable line, inoffensive and attentive, decent in their conversation, and, though their table was frugal, it was clean, and free from noise or impertinence. Although Augusta was evidently more out of her sphere than ever she had been, she yet derived some comfort from her situation with people of worth and character. Her mind assumed a degree of calmness, and, notwithstanding her tears daily flowed for the loss she had sustained, and sometimes, no doubt, the elegant and tender stranger presented himself to her thoughts, yet she sustained her adverse fate with that "acquiescent resignation" with which she had formerly hoped (before she began to fear) she should submit to the evils of life.

CHAP. XV.

THE PROSPECT OF A WEDDING, AND A DISCOVERY.

NEAR a month had passed since Augusta had quitted the rectory, which time she had chiefly spent in the house and fields of farmer Williams. She had no inducement from pleasant walks, as the country about was not calculated for such excursions, neither

did she think it altogether safe, as she had received intimations of great enquiries being made where she had secluded herself. All these enquiries she naturally fixed upon Lord Glamore, though she hoped he had, in the course of some new engagement, forgot both her and the artful method she had taken of apprizing him of her true sentiments. All her hopes were now, that she should be permitted to remain in obscurity and peace: "The world forgetting—by the world forgot." Her fears, however, were stimulated, by having further information, that honest David had withstood a powerful bribe, from a servant in Lord Glamore's livery.

"Shall I never be at rest?" cried Augusta, when Martha gave her this intelligence. "Oh! how much do I stand in need of a protector, or even adviser? Where shall I wander? To what retirement for security, from this base and cruel man?"

"Law's heart! my dear Miss Augusta, do not cry and take on so. I dares to say, as David will never peach, he is too honest to do any thing for the luke of gain. Why, am certain sure master Williams will partect you from harm; and as to advice, to be sure it would be very pursumshus in such a poor igrant sarvant as me to say any thing; but I does think, suppose you was to make some noration about your family in the newspapers. Mayhap somewhat might turn up trumps."

"Alas!" said Augusta, "what hopes can I entertain of being more successful now above eighteen years have elapsed, than my dear Mr. Monckley proved at the time, when it was so much less difficult to ascertain?"

“Why Ma’am, if you will give me leave, I will tell you, that I don’t think all the quires master made were worth one rush ; for I knows very well, that my poor mistress was so fearful of having you taken away, and made a papish, that she often and often put the letters into the fire.”

“Are you certain, Martha, of what you say ?”

“Aye, Ma’am, that I am, and will take my Bible oath, if there be need.”

“Weak, infatuated, yet well-meaning woman,” cried Augusta, “how, perhaps, have I to regret thy ill-placed tenderness ! But it is not then too late : I will, indeed, Martha, think of it, and reflect on the most likely method of putting the design in execution. Oh ! may it prove successful ! Some one may be left of my unfortunate family, who will afford protection to a wretched orphan. I ask not for their wealth. I wish for no more than I possess. Oh, merciful heaven ! enable me but to find out my relations, and thy suppliant servant will bless every infliction of sorrow thou hast bestowed !”

“Do, pray, dear Ma’am, put it all in the papers ; it is the only way to find what is lost. There is master Williams, he lost a horse, and had it cried three market days successively ; but he would never have gotten it again but for tizing it in Lunnon papers. Dear, sweet Mistress, do tize in the papers, and I’ll be bound for it you will hear of your friends, and then I will tell you a vast secret.”

“Secret ! what secret ?” asked Augusta, in an alarmed tone of voice.

“Nay, there’s no harm, neither ; but I’m somehow ’shamed too : but what would you think, Ma’am,

if I," (smirking and smiling) "if I should be going to change my condition?"

"Change your condition! Are you then going to leave me?"

"Laws, Ma'am, why can't you guess? I—believe—I be going to be married, and now the murder's out."

"Married! Martha, I am sure, if it is for your advantage, I shall most heartily rejoice."

"Laws, how good! Oh! yes, it will be a main good match for me. He is a farmer, and lives about twenty miles from this——."

"How did you get acquainted with him? Who knows him?"

"Oh! he is very well known in these parts; and for the matter of getting acquainted with him, why, pray, Ma'am, how did you get acquainted with that sweet pretty gentleman you was walking withal the last night that ever was that we lived at old master's?" She might have added with Shylock, "Are you answered?" The deepest crimson tinged the cheeks of Augusta at this shrewd question of her servant. "I hope he is a man of character?"

"Oh! I has no doubt of his character. He is a very sponisible farmer, and well to pass in the world. He took a fancy to me from the likeness I bear to his first wife; for he is a wooderman, and says as how, I am the perfect moral of her, and they were so happy, and so loving, and he is sure almost as we shall be so likewise: but I would not give my company to him, that is, not so freely, if I be obligated to leave you, Ma'am, unpurvided for. Now, if as how you could find out your friends, I would wed farmer Smith, and be as happy and as comfortable, with all my

things tidy about me, as Mrs. Williams, or any one in the world."

"If things turn out as you wish, and expect, you will be very fortunate, Martha."

"Why, I ha'n't much beauty, to be sure, to boast; 'but handsome is, that handsome does,' and I hopes no one will go for to say, that I ever did that as is dishonest, whether by night or day, with man, woman, nor child."

"I have a very good and well-grounded opinion of you, Martha, and shall be very happy to see you well settled with a good husband."

"Thank you kindly, Miss. I has no fear but I shall do as well as other folk. I'm sure he is main fond of me, and, with his good-will, he would bid the banns to-day before to-morrow, that he would: but I could not say aye till I had a bit of talk with you about it, and seeing as you are agreeable, I does not care how soon 'tis 'complished."

Augusta had no objections to make against the establishment of Martha in the way of matrimony; nor, indeed, did the thoughts of it engage her mind, so fully was she occupied with the knowledge she had obtained from Martha, relative to the conduct of Mrs. Rachael Monckley. New hopes filled her bosom; nor could she close her eyes that night, which was passed in forming the mode of advertising in the papers, how she should word it, and how guard against being deceived by any false pretender. Sometimes she thought that she had better decline it altogether; but the sanguine hopes and wishes, so natural to youth, banished all the cold dictates of prudence, which she styled, in this instance, an unjusti-

liable suspicion ; and she rose in the morning, fully resolved, not another day should pass, till, at least, she had taken one necessary step towards the discovery of her origin. After writing several different sketches, to be put in two of the London papers, she fixed on the following :—

“ A ship, from a foreign port, unknown, was, on the 22d of September, 1770, wrecked off the coast of Devonshire. One female body, supposed to be a passenger, of the rank of a domestic, was washed on shore ; but expired without being able to articulate any language. All that survived the wreck was a female infant of a month old, asleep in a cradle, which was enclosed in an old sail. This infant having been brought up by a benevolent clergyman, now lately deceased, still flatters herself she may learn, through this method of enquiry, some intelligence of her family. By the generosity of her first benefactor, she is independent of the world ; therefore it is only to claim a natural protection she has adopted the only means left her of making her situation known through the medium of newspapers.” Then followed where any letters might be addressed, &c.

She gave the several letters to Martha, with a strict charge to carry them to the Post office, which was at the neatest town, about three miles from Mr. Williams's. If it had been six, Martha would not have objected ; for she had her sweetheart to accompany her, who was full of glee at the assurances she had given him of being his wife as soon as the banns were properly published, and which he proposed giving into

his parish the next day, as he was obliged to go to London to settle some affairs with his landlord ; and on that day fortnight he begged she would meet him at his house, that she might see the place she would soon be, he hoped, the happy mistress of ; and he would return with her, and go to Malvern church, and be lawfully married in the sight of God and man. He took the letters from her to put them into the office, and then regaling her with some wine and cakes, saw her safe home, where he took a most affectionate leave of his beloved Patty, the tenderness of which sent her crying her eyes out to her young Lady, when she came to acquaint her with her great punctuality in discharging her order. Till the time arrived that it was possible to receive any answer to her enquiries, Augusta passed in a thousand probable and ten thousand improbable conjectures ; they were too various and desultory to be related. Her mind solely occupied by hope, expectation, and their almost constant attendant, fear, she hardly eat or slept. The simply opening a door threw her into a tremor, and the sound even of a waggon, the rapidity of her ideas formed into a post-chaise : but how heavy did the hours lag for each day's post, when intelligence of some sort or other might have been expected ! Each disappointment only gave birth to new hopes for the next, and so on, till one auspicious happy morn brought a letter with the wished address. Half fainting, and breathless, Augusta snatched it from the hand of Martha, and then sinking on a chair, she had not the power of opening it. Martha was terrified to see her in such a quandary, and brought her a glass of cold water to raise her spirits, 'seeing as how she was a cup too low.' Au-

gusta raising her eyes to heaven, to give her strength to bear what she might learn, broke up the seal, with as much trepidation as if she was going to look into the inscrutable volumes of the Sybils.—These were the contents.

“The prayers of a tender parent are, perhaps, heard and answered! But this morning, by accident, the writer of this met with an extraordinary advertisement. Her hopes, her fears, are excited—if the infant, found on the 22d of September, 1770, belongs to her, she is fair complexioned, with blue eyes, and promised to be beautiful. Her dress was of the finest corded muslin, with Mechlin lace. Her under linen the finest cambric, trimmed the same. Her cap, such as is worn by boys, with a coronet worked in the crown. The cradle of fine cane wicker-work, ornamented with coloured silks, and the furniture white Marseilles quilting. The circumstance of this infant, though born of English parents, being in a foreign vessel, may be fully proved to A. M. if every thing else should answer. Oh! let the writer of this conjure the advertiser to transmit the earliest account, whether her hopes are answered, that she may embrace her long deplored daughter!”

A line addressed to ———, &c.

“Oh! fetch the things this instant, Martha,” cried Augusta, half frantic. “Where is the key?” feeling in her pockets, and pulling out all they contained.

“I believe,” said Martha, rather confused, “I have got it: you gave me your keys one day, and I forgot to give this to you.” This passed unheeded by

Augusta, and she hastily opened the case, and as anxiously examining the contents, found them answer in each particular.

"Oh! heaven, I thank thee!" cried Augusta, falling on her knees; I shall find a parent! I shall be clasped in the arms of a tender mother! What joy, yet what a sensation of pain I feel here," she added, putting her hand on her bosom. She was almost suffocated, but a flood of tears relieved her overcharged heart. In a short time she grew composed enough to write a few lines, importing, that the things in her possession exactly tallied with the description given of them; that her heart would feel no ease till she was assured she had a mother, for whom she already felt the tenderest filial love.

Some more days of anxious expectation were to be passed. How well has Mason painted it!

"With what a leaden and retarded weight

"Doth expectation load the wings of time!"

The letter could not get to town till the third day after it was written. Augusta then calculated how long a mother, eager to find her long-lost daughter, would take to travel near two hundred miles. Herself would have flown. Let any persons place themselves in her situation. Those, (if any have, in any degree,) who have been similarly circumstanced, may form some idea of the watching, the anxiety, the every wish, and hope, and fear she felt. She heard a carriage. She flew to the window, and as hastily flew back to a chair, which received her, grasping, trembling and fainting. She heard some one quickly ascending the stairs. The door opened, and she heard a strange voice cry

out, "Shall I be so blest to find my daughter?" She heard no more; a darkness came over her eyes, and she became dead to the world, and all she had anxiously hoped for. The usual remedies had the usual effect, and the happy Augusta soon revived, and received the caresses of an elegant, and once beautiful woman, who lavished them upon her with all the fondness of a mother. A thousand incoherent questions were asked, and a thousand incoherent answers given in return. The mother discovered the likeness she bore to her beloved father, whose image still lived in her heart, although he had been many years deceased. It is almost the first wish of mothers' hearts, that their children should be handsome. This good lady never was tired of admiring the charms of her beloved daughter. She enumerated them all with rapture.

"Oh! my God, what eyes! What a lovely symmetry of limbs! What a complexion! But your father was one of the handsomest men I ever saw. I too was reckoned handsome when I was young; but you are his image. Oh! my beloved Augusta, for by that name I find I must call you, how extatic are the feelings of a mother on finding such a child! Where is the worthy man that preserved you in infancy?"

"Alas! my dearest mother, he is no more."

"Oh! I recollect: but is there no one of his family to whom I might repay some of my obligations?"

"Ah! no; they are all dead. I am in mourning for all my kind friends. I was left alone in the world."

"Thank God! my lovely child, you have now friends of your own; friends who can support you in

that rank in which you were born: I am connected with many people of the first quality. How they will rejoice! They who have so often heard me deplore the loss of my only child, how will they share my joy now she is restored! My love, I must take you from this place, and this society, so ill suited to the figure you will make when introduced into the world as my daughter. Your father was a general officer, and related to nobility. Had he lived, he would have been a Lord. It is a long and melancholy story; but we are now happy, and I will not look back for trouble to damp the pleasure of this meeting."

They took a slight repast, and the lady declaring she had not slept since she received the letter from Augusta, she tenderly pressed her to take some repose, which she did in an arm chair. While she slept Augusta sat watching her, with a heart overflowing with delight, thankfulness, and admiration. Her appearance was just what she had always hoped, and indeed flattered herself, she should find in her mother, elegant, fashionable, and an air of the world, which accomplished as Augusta was, she felt she wanted.

"But under the eye of such a mother, what shall Augusta want?" she cried, as she fondly gazed upon her.—"Of rank too! Ah! Mrs Rachael Monckley was right. I always felt an expansion of soul that ill accorded with my confined situation. It was inherent in my nature, and would shew itself. Now I shall be in my proper sphere. Ah!" said she, breathing a gentle sigh, "perhaps I may see and know who this amiable stranger is. Would I could know by what name to call him, that I might sometimes think of

him ; but away all thoughts that do not centre in my present felicity. How can I think of any thing but my dear, my beloved mother? Sweet, and new sound, from the lips of the happy, thrice happy, Augusta !”

While they were taking their tea, and mutually admiring each other, “My love,” said the mother, “you do not look always thus pale, I hope?” — “The afflictions I have known for more than two months past, my dear Madam, have had an effect on my health, but I have naturally a colour.” — “I hope it will return with health and happiness, my dear. I am afraid my two saucy girls of nieces ; for when,” she added with a sigh, “I had, as I thought, no child of my own, I took one of each of my sisters, and brought them up — and charming amiable girls they are, about your age ; but, as I was saying, I doubt they will find a rival in you. However, they are both engaged, very much to my inclination and their advantage, so you must not attempt to rob them of their lovers.” — “No, heaven forbid I should act so base a part !”

“Perhaps, my love, you may already have one?”

“No indeed, nor wish for any.”

“Oh, that is a likely story,” patting her cheek ; “I have no doubt but you have had some very tender things said to you, by your rustic beaux, though I hope none of them made an impression on your heart.” “When you have leisure, my dear mother, to listen to the little history of your child, you will hear, I was within these two months, very near being married.” Her mother expressed great curiosity to hear, and she related her engagement to Henry, and by how shocking an accident her marriage had been

prevented. The lady declared herself very much grieved for the misfortune, but added, "I cannot help rejoicing that the match did not take place. It would have been a very improper connexion between the daughter of General Spencer, and an obscure parson. No, my dear, I hope I shall find a very different establishment for you; and I farther hope, you will look on me, as much your friend, as mother—and consult me about the affairs of your heart without disguise. My sole wish is to make you happy, and connect you according to your rank. I am impatient to have you make your *debut* in high life. A few months in the world will wear off that little *mauvaise honte*, which a retired country education will always give, for there may be a fault, even in modesty, as it prevents our shewing our accomplishments to the greatest advantage. It will be my pride to see you as much distinguished, as my growing partiality for you sees you will deserve. But, my dear, I shall vote for an early supper, that we may retire soon to rest; it is necessary for us both, after such an exertion of our tender feelings, and I purpose setting off to-morrow morning for London." Augusta wished for a little more time; she wanted very much to send for Mr. Bendley, to introduce that worthy man to her new found mother, and make him a partaker in her happiness. Mrs. Spencer however opposed it. "You shall write to him when you are settled at home, and we will consult on some return to make him, for his kindness to you." Augusta then ordered her bed to be prepared for the reception of her mother, and took that of Martha's for herself, who was provided elsewhere. But the idea of her happy change

prevented her sleeping. She rose early to make preparations for her journey—took an affectionate leave of Martha, giving her something towards house-keeping, and made some presents to Mrs. Williams, who she had already paid for a quarter's board and lodging. Martha would have felt great sorrow at parting with her mistress, but her mind was taken up with the thoughts of meeting her love; and it was a double joy to her, that events should so fall out, that they should both be going in search of happiness the same day.

A post chaise and four, with two attendants, was ordered by ten o'clock, and the happy mother and daughter, prepared for their journey; during which, Augusta informed her mother of all the incidents of her life, one circumstance excepted; for though she meant to tell her every thing, she could not somehow mention her little adventure with the amiable stranger. Just after they had changed horses at the first stage, a post chaise passed them, and a gentleman who was in it, caught the attention of Augusta. Her heart fluttered, and instantly recognized the person she continually thought of, but who, she was not inclined to mention. Conjecture then went to work for some little time, but the conversation of her mother recalled her recollection and attention; she told her by what means she had been put on board a foreign vessel; this was a most interesting subject to Augusta, and she became all ear in a moment. "She had not long been married to General Spencer, when his military duty called him to a foreign station, and from whence he was ordered to the West Indies, just as she was recovering from her lying-in. That her mother had

been particularly anxious to have the child sent to her, and fearing the length of the voyage would be too much for the infant, she had consented it should be sent to England, and confided it to the care of a French servant, who acted as wet nurse, and who from living long in the family, loved the child as her own. Her care, no doubt, had preserved its life, by enclosing the cradle in the sail." "Oh!" cried Augusta, "what must you have felt, when you heard your poor child did not arrive?" "Yes, my dear, indeed it is beyond my power to describe. But I can think of nothing now, but my happiness in having you restored; so we will not dwell on melancholy stories that are now over."

"But my father, tell me of my dear father?"

"Oh, he was a most excellent man; how he would have doated on you! but I lost him. He died as a soldier should, fighting for his king and country in America. It was a bitter blow to me; but we must submit to those events, and strive to forget them, it is our duty." Augusta dropped some filial tears to his memory, and her mother wiped her eyes. However, she seemed of a cheerful disposition, and beguiled the time of their journey of its length, by many diverting anecdotes of persons and things she had seen in her travels.

We forgot to mention, that when Augusta related the insult she had met with from Lord Glamore, which she did with all the warmth of colouring, her mother expressed great indignation. "He little thought," said she, "it was the daughter of General Spencer, he dared to treat with so much indignity." "It makes little difference in the crime," answered

Augusta, "whether it was the daughter of a prince or a peasant, when virtue in either is outraged." "Why, he is a man of gallantry to be sure, but he would respect the virtue of a girl of fashion, though he might not scruple to violate that of a little insignificant country gentlewoman. But there are great allowances to be made for even him. He is not happy in his marriage."

"Do you know Lady Glamore?"

"Yes, I know her, but she is not that sort of woman I would visit; indeed few of my acquaintance do. Her character is much doubted; and I have heard his Lordship pitied exceedingly. She is not a woman I could be seen with." "I have heard she is amiable."

"Most people you will find, when you mix in the world, have two characters, but her's, I believe I may say is pretty well known. I know last winter my Lord wanted to get a divorce. They live very unhappy indeed." "Well, I cannot but think the fault originates with him. I hope I shall never see him." "If you do, he will be most heartily ashamed of his folly, I dare say, when he sees you in the character of a woman of fashion. I should enjoy his mortification of all things." "And I," said Augusta, "should enjoy nothing so much, as the certainty of never seeing him again, so entirely is he my aversion."

The ladies travelled with great expedition, only stopping for a few hours at night; and the following evening they arrived at an elegant and nobly furnished house. Mrs. Spencer welcomed our heroine to it, with all the glow of maternal affection. The taste of the furniture—the elegance of the lustres, and clearness of the large mirrors, attracted the

notice of Augusta, and filled her young bosom with delight : very natural, when she reflected, that they belonged to her own mother.

“ I find,” said Mrs. Spencer, who had left her a few minutes alone, “ I find, by my house-keeper, that both my nieces are gone to the play this evening with a lady of fashion, by way of *chaperone*. You must be fatigued with the length of your journey, so we will not wait supper for the girls.” Augusta declared she should prefer her bed, not having been accustomed to travel, to any supper, therefore only taking a biscuit and some wine and water, her mother shewed her to a magnificent chamber, with an elegant bed of pale blue sattin, festooned and trimmed with fringe in a most superb style, the rest of the furniture corresponding. A maid servant attended with wax-lights, and every species of elegance and taste was displayed, indeed, throughout the house. Not having been accustomed to undress before any one, Augusta declined the assistance of the servant, and having dismissed her, taking an affectionate leave of her mother, and dropped the bolt of her chamber-door, she prepared for bed, with a heart filled with the most grateful thankfulness to heaven for having heard her ardent prayers, and so delightfully having accomplished the first and fondest wish of her early youth. Mrs. Spencer would not allow her to be disturbed in the morning, and the slumbers of a mind now perfectly at ease, had so intirely refreshed and repaired her looks, that the fond mother could not refrain from clasping her in her arms with increased rapture.—“ I am a great admirer of female beauty, and am likewise a good judge of it,” said she.

“How should it be otherwise?” said Augusta, though blushing as she spoke, fearful that her mother would think she meanly meant to flatter, while at the same time she spoke only her real sentiments: “an acquaintance with your own person must have given you a perfect knowledge of female beauty.”

“Oh! my sweet little flatterer, how do you gain on my affections each moment! Yes, indeed, I once was thought handsome, and consequently had many admirers; but that time is past, and I can see with delight the beauty of this generation, which it is my greatest pleasure to improve as much as possible. But come, my dear, let me introduce you to your new relations. They are but just risen, for they staid to sup with their friends, and made it very late. I hope they did not disturb you last night. I left orders for them to be particularly careful, for they are giddy, giggling girls.”

Augusta assured her mother she had slept too soundly to hear any thing: “It has, indeed, been a long time since I enjoyed so sweet, so refreshing a repose.”

In the anti-drawing-room an elegant breakfast was prepared, and Mrs. Spencer leading in Augusta, presented her, as her long-lost daughter, to two very fashionable young women, the eldest of which did not appear to be more than seventeen.—“My beloved Augusta, these are my nieces, Eliza Beverley, and Clara Barry. I hope you will become friends. They are prepared to admire you, and your amiable disposition will soon make them love you, as, I doubt not, you will them.” After mutual congratulations from the young ladies declaring the happiness such an

accession to their society would afford them, and the same assurances from Augusta, they sat themselves down to their breakfast, consisting of a variety of elegancies to excite the appetite.

“Can you spare us the coach, Madam, this morning?” asked Miss Beverley.

“I do not know, my dear : I had some thoughts of taking my daughter out.”

“I beg, my dear mother, you will not suffer that intention to disappoint my cousins. If you please, I had rather stay at home this morning, unless you particularly require my attendance.”

“Oh ! not particularly ; but I wished to purchase something, that your dress might be a little more modernized.”

“Why,” said Clara, “to be sure this great coat is rather *outré* ; the collar is not half high enough ; and don’t you think that black bombazeen is too heavy now Spring is so much advanced ?”

“I cannot yet lay by my first mourning,” replied Augusta ; “it would be ungrateful to the memories of my dearest friends.”

“Though I do not see the absolute necessity of your keeping it on, my dear,” said her mother, “as they were people wholly unknown in the great world, yet I extremely admire your gratitude ; it is an amiable trait : and, indeed, you look so very handsome, by the contrast of the colour to your lovely complexion, that I do not wish you to lay it aside, only we may improve the mode of it. You have I see an excellent taste in putting on your things. Look, Clara, if a whole winter in town could have taught any one to put a simple beaver hat on more becomingly ?”

"Ah!" cried Clara, laughing, "when nature has given any one a beautiful face, she kindly, at the same time, teaches them to make the most of it."

"Well, then, my dear mother will indulge my cousins in having the coach upon Miss Barry's principle, for I think she looks as if she would gain a conquest this morning, or, perhaps, what she will prefer, secure that more effectually she has already made." Clara seemed much gratified by this compliment.

"I find," continued Augusta, "I have not recovered from my fatigue, and if my cousins will indulge me with a book, I shall not interfere with any one's engagements."

"You are fond of reading then?" said Mrs. Spencer.

"I suppose you used to get Novels in the country?" asked Eliza Beverly.

"My chief reading has been history," answered Augusta.

"Oh! I will bring you Histories, Memoirs, and Adventures, enough to employ you a week," cried Clara, running out of the room, and soon returned with her apron full of books:—"Here is the lively and the lamentable, the merry and the melancholy," continued she, throwing them on the table. Augusta turned some of them over, and happened to take up the Nabob, a description of some part of the East Indies, took her attention.

"You will be amused with that book," said Clara, "for Major Dalrymple says it is a very exact account of the modes and customs in Calcutta."

"Apropos!" said Mrs. Spencer: "was the Major of your party last night?"

“ Oh ! most assuredly ; constant as the turtle dove, and, by the bye, you must go to Ranelagh to-night. He will be here to tea, and Sir William Forbes likewise.”

“ Will they ? And any body else ?”

“ I don't know : I have not asked any other. Have you, Beverley ?”

“ No, I shall content myself with my swain, Sir William. You know he is apt to be a little jealous if I shew attention to any one beside, and I must be cautious of my conduct.”

The coach was ordered, the three ladies sat off in it, and Augusta retired with her books to her chamber. She found, on the perusal of them, that the adventure, which had made so deep an impression on her mind, was really by no means so uncommon as she had thought ; for she met with something similar in almost every volume : however, she found herself amused and interested by the contents, and reading with avidity, knew not how the time passed till she heard a loud clock strike four. She threw her books away to make some alteration in her dress, which, however, would not admit of much variety ; therefore she only substituted a black bombazeen jacket, trimmed with crape, in the room of her great coat ; and, as she found the ladies, her cousins, did not wear caps, she took more than ordinary pains to adjust her beautiful hair, without any addition of powder, that the curls might drop gracefully as their's did. It was near five when the coach returned from Hyde Park, where they had been airing. They all seemed in high spirits, and talked away of a variety of persons, chiefly men, whose names being unknown

to our heroine, she scarcely attended to; but it struck her, how very different a town education had made her cousins from her; for though she was more and more convinced (and perhaps her morning studies had contributed to confirm her opinion) that she never loved Henry but as a brother, yet she never wished for the admiration of any other; and these girls, although engaged to men of their choice, seemed to languish for, and even enjoy the praises of a multitude of men, whom they enumerated, and who had paid them the most extravagant compliments. Mrs. Spencer and Clara had made some alteration to their dress before dinner was announced; but Eliza came down in her *robe de chambre*, which, when her aunt observed, she said she had made an engagement at seven, and therefore should not dress till the evening, for she had peremptorily insisted that Sir William should not come till nine."

"And, pray, who are you engaged with?"

"Oh! with—a—."

"Pshaw, nonsense," cried Mrs. Spencer, "why, you told me your mantua-maker. Well, I hope he will acquit himself properly. Shall you wear your new *chemise* to night?"

"Oh! yes, positively, if he can get it ready. My dear cousin," turning to Augusta, "you cannot conceive the fatigue these men give us."

"Do you employ a male mantua-maker, Miss Beverley?" asked Augusta, smiling.

"Lord! no one beside is able to do things properly, the women are such awkward wretches." She thought it odd; but as her mother did not offer any thing

against the practice, she supposed that every body submitted to this strange custom.

Precisely at seven Augusta heard a strange lumbering in the hall, and the noise sounding so like a coffin, that the recollection of what she felt when she heard the mournful sound of those which contained the bodies of her beloved Mr. Monckley and Henry, made her turn pale and sick. "Heavens !" said she, faintly, "what noise is that ?"

"Oh ! it is only my beau in a chair."

"Yes," said Mrs. Spencer, "so fashionable a mantua-maker as he is cannot walk ; beside, he has brought the dress with him. Do not let him wait, Eliza. Consider, time is precious, and you must be dressed *comme il faut* by nine." Away Eliza tripped, singing an air.—Augusta wished to finish her book, so took the opportunity of Mrs. Spencer's writing a letter, to go up to her room for that purpose. As she crossed the hall, two strange-looking men were waiting with something, which she supposed to be a chair.

"Lord love you, look, Pat !" cried one of the men to the other ; "there's a sweet creature ! she is but just come, I dare say." Augusta running up stairs, heard no more ; nor did she pay any particular attention, the adventures she had been reading in the morning being the chief object of her thoughts.

About nine she received a summons to the drawing-room, where she found another lady, who was introduced by the name of Miss Montague, elegantly dressed, and highly accomplished in the fashionable mode of the times. Major Dalrymple, whom she was

astonished to see, an emaciated, yellow-looking man, of fifty at least, with a long, scraggy, lean neck, and a sharp nose, red with pimples. "Mercy on me!" she thought, "what could have induced such a girl as Clara Barry to select such an object for her choice?" Sir William Forbes, much of the same age, but with a look of haughtiness, that by no means improved a set of coarse features, and a Colonel Hotham, made up the party, with her mother and cousin Clara, Eliza Beverley being not yet dressed. Profuse and irksome to our heroine were the compliments paid to her by the men, who hovered about her with a freedom she did not like. Happy did she think herself that they were each engaged to marry, for she found Colonel Hotham was a professed admirer of Miss Montague: however, they, with one voice, declared there could be no Ranelagh without the lovely Miss Monckley would go. She had previously fixed in her mind she would not comply with their intreaties, and was supported in her resolution by her mother. The conversation soon took another turn on the arrival of Eliza Beverly, who looked like a star, so bright, so elegant was her dress? The men and women crowded about her to examine each part. No wonder it engaged the most marked attention of Augusta. She had never seen, or ever heard, of any thing so beautiful. The company kept up a lively conversation on a variety of subjects, and all the agreeable nothings which the beaux and belles know how so prettily to vary, that if the mind is fatigued, it cannot define how or why it is so; and this brilliant *badianage* lasted so long, that really Augusta began to think they had given over all thoughts of Ranelagh.

How then was she surprised to find that they were to go two or three miles to an evening diversion, at near eleven o'clock at night. The delighted and cheerful party took their leave of her, and being quite tired with the new scenes to which she had been so lately introduced, she retired to bed as soon as they sallied forth.

The next morning, when she met her cousins, which was not till long after she and her mother had breakfasted, they were full of raptures in the delights of Ranelagh; they never found it half so charming in their lives.

"But," cried Clara, "I am dying to know who that lovely young fellow was, that eyed our party with such a scrutiny. I believe Sir William felt a jealous pang."

"I do not know him," said Mrs. Spencer, "and yet so general is my acquaintance, I wonder I should not, if he is a man of fashion."

"As to the jealousy of Sir William I cannot pretend to say how far it may carry him; but in my mind he could have no cause from the notice the handsome young stranger took of us. He seemed, indeed, to look very earnestly, and, perhaps, might know who we were; but they were not looks, I should think, to excite jealousy."

"Well, he is indisputably the handsomest man I ever saw! Oh! how those eyes would melt in certain situations."

"What do you mean?" cried Mrs. Spencer, frowning, "by certain situations?" I beg, Clara, you would recollect yourself."

"Nay, I only mean if he was gazing on the woman

he loved. Lord, I was not thinking of any thing else."

"I should think," joined Augusta, "that if the Major knew your sentiments, he would have most reason to be jealous."

"Oh! my dear," returned the gay Clara, "it is one thing to admire a man, and another to connect one's self seriously. The Major and I are very happy in the opinion each entertains of the other."

"You are a mad girl, Clara," said Mrs. Spencer: "nothing but time will tame you: and to that remedy I must leave you, for I promised to call on Miss Montague this morning, and I shall take the opportunity" (turning to Augusta) "of calling upon a near relation of mine, to let him know I have discovered my long-lost, lovely child."

"Oh! pray, my dear mother," said Eliza, ("you must not wonder, cousin Augusta, I call my aunt by that title, I have been so long accustomed to think her so;) but, my dear mother, do not forget you asked last night's party to sup here."

"No, no, I have given directions accordingly, so pray amuse yourselves as you please till my return. I shall be at home between four and five."—The coach coming to the door, she took her leave, and the girls saying they should like a stroll in the Park; which Augusta declining, they pursued their fancies, and she her's. Reading was one of her favorite amusements, and she found something so fascinating in these her new studies, that she impatiently longed for the time to get to her chamber and regale herself.

CHAP. XVI.

MORE DISCOVERY OF THE WORLD.

AUGUSTA had been accustomed to ruminate and reflect; and she could not help it, on the occurrences of the late evening, when the Ranelagh party met at Mrs. Spencer's to sup. There was a freedom in the manners of the men, in their conduct to the girls, whom they were engaged to marry, which she entirely disapproved. She was not quite satisfied neither with the behaviour of her mother. She condemned herself for fastidiousness of her sentiments, which seemed so opposite to theirs, and thought she was wrong to criticise their actions, when, perhaps, her own were as reprehensible in their eyes. She attributed the freedom of expression, and the loud laugh, to the education they had received, and she failed not to thank heaven for what had appeared to her as a misfortune, as it had ultimately proved a blessing, her having been brought up, from her earliest infancy, under the care of such a man as Mr. Monckley.

“ My mother I see is devoted to the pleasures and enjoyment of high life. With her I must have been neglected in early youth, and left to servants, or, at best, a venal governess. I should have known nothing but how to dress, dance, or sing. It is plain, these cousins of mine know no more than the most trifling accomplishments. All gaiety and dissipation, what



M^{rs} Rachael Monckley

wives, what mothers, will they make? And married to old men too, who render age contemptible, by assuming follies, which only giddy youth can extenuate though hardly excuse. Happy then, most happy and thankful am I, that by a well-grounded early education, I may be enabled to pass my youth with cheerful innocence, and not be constrained to run from one public amusement to another, merely to waste that time, so precious when it is well employed, and so tedious and irksome to those who know not its value, or only mark its lapse by some glaring impropriety or ridiculous folly. Let me not, however, exult in my fancied superiority over my cousins. On the contrary, let me never forget to whom, and through whom, it is owing, that my mind has taken a different turn."

She had now passed a week with her mother, and had never been out of the house; a circumstance, which, though not unpleasing to her, she could not but remark as something singular; the self-assigned reason of Mrs. Spencer was "that she wished to establish the identity of her being her daughter, to one or two of her near relations; who, as they would be dispossessed of some considerable property, by her being acknowledged the heir of General Spencer, seemed inclined to disbelieve it." Augusta felt exceedingly shocked at this information. "Let them take their wealth," said she, "I wish not for it. I can be content with the legacy Mr. Monckley left me. In my application to the public, as a means of discovering my family, I disclaimed all idea of doing so, from interested motives, that is, lucrative views. I wanted only protection. I grieve, my dear Madam, to have occasioned you so much trouble; but how can it be

settled?" "Oh, I have consulted the most eminent lawyers on the subject. This business, my dear, has taken up so much of my time, and occasioned my so frequently leaving you; but to-night I will take you to the play; I will not have you confined, moping at home by yourself; for I see it is impossible to keep these giddy girls in order, and they are quite out of spirits if they have not company to divert them." "I hope to heaven we shall see this charming incognito," cried Clara. "Every place where I have been for some time, I have seen him. It is a most wonderful mystery, that none of our acquaintance know him." "When I first saw him," said Eliza, "I thought he might have been the Duke of C——, for I think him something like the family." "A very improved likeness then," replied Clara; "he seems all softness, all animation." "You have joined two qualities," observed Augusta, "that are very seldom united." "Why, have you not seen some people, in whom they are eminently conspicuous? soft, timid, gentle, and yet, when occasion calls for exertion, all fire, spirit, and animation?" While she spoke, some how it occurred to Augusta, that she had once seen such a person — the recollection pleased and pained her. Clara went on. "If you have not seen such a one lately, pray look in the glass, and tell me if I have not drawn your portrait, as like as life."

"Mine, Clara! mine!"

"Yes, most truly,—how soft you were just now; but when you, with a noble pride, reprobated the idea of wealth, my God, you looked all spirit, all animation; therefore judgment good people; may not softness and animation dwell in my hero?" "I am

sure they do in mine !” sighed Augusta to herself, but added aloud, “ You are a nice discerner, Clara.”

“ True, my dear,” said Mrs. Spencer ; “ your eyes and features are great tell-tales ; the sentiments of your heart will soon be discovered.” “ Then it shall be my business, Madam, to keep that heart in so regular a train of rectitude, that I may never be fearful of having its sentiments known.” “ Come, do not let us fall into grave morality, Augusta,” said the lively Clara, “ for I shall be quite *ennui*.”

“ Oh, pray, Madam, will you lend me a couple of guineas ?” asked Eliza. “ What for ?” said Mrs. Spencer, with a very grave look ; “ I do not know what young girls can want with money ? I can’t spare you so much just now.” “ Will you give me leave to supply my cousin ?” said her daughter : “ shall I be your creditor, Eliza ?” “ You are very good, my dear Augusta, if you can spare it, I shall be obliged to you ; I will return it when my quarter becomes due.” “ I wish to cure you of your extravagance, my dear niece, and therefore consent to your cousin’s request, because I am sure you will repay her—and as sure you would forget that you were in my debt.” “ Oh, I’ll be hanged,” answered she, “ if you would not take care to remind me often enough.”

Augusta taking notice that Clara eyed her purse with great attention, thought very likely she was in the same predicament as her other cousin. “ Clara,” said she, “ will you become my debtor too ?” taking out two guineas more. “ Lord bless you, how good you are ; I declare, upon my honour, I have not had a shilling in my pocket this month.” “ How came you then by that elegant *fausse montre*, pray ?” “ Why

I changed my other for it, at Jefferies, and the Major paid the difference. I am sure you must know it could not have been bought with money that you have given me." "Provided for with every thing, as you girls are, I am certain it is but throwing money in the dirt, to let you have the spending of it." Although Augusta's ideas of money were not that it should be thrown away in idle extravagance, yet she had so thorough a contempt for parsimony, that she could not but be hurt at the knowledge of these girls being made so unpleasantly dependent on their aunt, who professed to consider them as her own children, and thought too, the very profuse style of their living, might have been abated in many articles, which would supply the girls with a reasonable allowance. She thought she should rather substitute some other wine, for instance, than champagne, and many luxuries which frequently went untasted from table. But as she did not know what her mother's income was, or how much she really did allow them, she condemned herself for making strictures, of what she could be no judge as to their propriety.

"But pray, my dear, now we are on the subject of money," said Mrs. Spencer, "did your old friend leave any cash for your exigencies? for you will not yet receive your legacy."

"Yes, Madam, I had enough by me to support me with economy, till my legacy became due, but I had paid a quarter's board and lodging for myself and servant: and as I had agreed for six months, I thought it but reasonable to make some allowance, by way of compensation for their disappointment in losing their lodger—and as I found myself so happy

in my future prospects with my dear mother, who assured me she had both power and will to support me in the rank I was born to, I thought it incumbent on me to reward my poor faithful Martha, who was going to be married, as well for her kind services, as to prove my gratitude to heaven for the blessings which it had showered down upon me. I therefore gave the good creature a twenty pound note, and —”

“And what the devil, I was going to say, made you so liberal?” “The generosity I had experienced from others, taught me the same sentiment,” cried

Augusta, abashed and shocked at the evident violence of her mother’s temper—and indeed, had it not been for the interruption, she was going to add to the and,

“I have still one note left, of fifteen pounds, with about ten or twelve guineas in cash.” But a moment’s recollection now checked her from mentioning this circumstance; she found, as a drawback on her felicity, in being settled in a mother’s house, that generosity, or the sentiments of universal benevolence, which glowed in her own breast, were not in the catalogue of her mother’s virtues. She secretly rejoiced that she should have a little independence of her own, with which she might enjoy the heart-felt delight of rewarding modest worth, or relieving the penury of sickness, as she had ever been accustomed to do, by the encouragement and example of her beloved friend. But although unacquainted with the world, she knew enough of human nature, never to expect to meet with perfection in it; and therefore, with her usual candour and good sense, made every allowance for the prejudices of education on the actions of mankind, tenderly judging of others, while severe to herself,

she arrogated no self-applause, but attributed all the virtues, which gladdened, while they mended, her heart, to the excellent precepts she had received from her first and benevolent friend, to whose memory, every day she lived, she became more and more grateful, as she experienced the benefits more fully, she derived from his kind attentions during her infant years, while her ductile and tender heart was capable of receiving the best, and most lasting impressions.

Such were her reflections while she was dressing, and these likewise occurred to her : that her mother had never once examined her, as to her improvement of mind, or principles of religion. She seemed to idolize her personal attractions, without appearing the least interested about her mental acquirements. This indifference, in the most essential articles, gave as much pain as astonishment to Augusta, who had flattered herself with the pleasing surprise of a mother, that had lost her child so early in life, to find her so well educated, and so perfectly acquainted with all true knowledge ; for Augusta bore her faculties with so much modest diffidence, that without encouragement from others, few could tell how accomplished she really was, and with how much precision and judgment she formed her opinions ; though she endeavoured to respect and love her relations, yet she found their minds so little congenial with her own, that it was a constant source of self-examination in her to discover why she could not feel that sympathy in their amusements which seemed so delightful to themselves, but which she could not partake of with pleasure.—“ Surely,” she thought, “ I must, as poor Henry used to say, ‘ have an uncommonly cold and insensible

heart,' I cannot enter into the jests with which this society abounds, producing the loud laugh, the quick repartee, and familiar whisper: I hope it is not an affectation of a too refined delicacy, when I feel shocked at the freedom with which the men address me, or the mirth which my reserve occasions, in my mother and cousins. Are all the world, to whom I am soon to be introduced, the same as this family of mine? If so, I shall feel as much alone as if I was in a desert. Oh! could but those happy days return, when, in sweet and improving confidence, I used to converse with my beloved benefactor, when each hour was marked with some attainment of knowledge, or some exercise of benevolence! Vain wish! and yet not more vain than that sanguine expectation which dilated my heart, when I fancied, in a mother's arms, I should find all happiness centered, all my wishes accomplished: but, I then should have been too happy—perhaps more so than it is allowed mortals to be. I hope I am not of a discontented mind; that would be an irremediable misfortune; but since I arrived here I cannot trace one hour that has brought felicity or satisfaction in the retrospect. Surely, an early habit of reflection makes me criticise too minutely on events and subjects that others pass over as common. My mother knows the world, and although she may despise the rigidity of severe morality, she yet would venerate its laudable customs. Perhaps, the freedom with which she treats some serious subjects, and which have alarmed me, may proceed from her desire to judge of my sentiments in controverting them: I will think so, for there is comfort in the idea. How wrong then have I been to sink into melancholy and

unsocial reflection, when it has been her wish and intention that I should prove the excellence of the doctrines I have been taught, and which it must delight a mother's heart to find I am governed by. Her mind grew more tranquillized, as this hope gained ground in her opinion, and tranquillity soon gave way to cheerfulness, and by a natural gradation her spirits rose high, which gave the most brilliant animation to her countenance, and filled her mother with rapture, when she descended to the dining parlour. She rejoiced to find they were to have no company that day, as she liked her cousins infinitely better, when they were without the society of men ; and nothing passed during the dinner that gave her any uneasy sensations, so that she delivered herself up to the pleasure of being much entertained by seeing a play, a representation of which was totally novel to her. The girls diverted themselves with the idea of her being, for the first time in her life, at such a spectacle, and told her, she must expect to be an object of observation, both from her being a new face, and likewise from the surprise the effect of such a new species of entertainment would have on her expressive features.

The Comedy of the Confederacy was performed that night at Covent-Garden, and surely, for a virtuous, ingenuous, and innocent young creature, as our heroine, no one play on the stock could have been selected so improper. Full of intrigue and debasing sentiments, vicious combinations and artful chicanery, powerfully supported by the best performers, to render the various mischiefs of the piece more impressive on the ductile mind of youth, and calculated to poison the yet untainted heart, no play could be better

imagined; where, in such a representation of accumulated bad characters can the moral lie? Every species of vice is depicted, which in the end is rewarded, not with its deserts, but in the accomplishment of its wish. We are aware, we shall be called melancholy, morose moralists, or sour and severe satirists, for this critique on a piece universally admired, but admired without reflecting on its pernicious tendency.

The lights, the scenery, the company, all engrossed the attention of Augusta; but when the performance began, which was soon after they were seated in a front row of the front boxes, her eyes and ears were chained to the stage, not to be diverted from it by the continued chatting of her young companions, about the company, many of whom they seemed to have an acquaintance with. Augusta, as she attended most scrupulously to the characters, hoped she should find they would meet with some punishment for their profligacy, and waited each act for some respectable personage to appear, whose sentiments might improve as well as direct: however, her reflections were broken in upon by Clara, between whom and her mother she was seated:

“Lord! Augusta, do look at the third box from the stage, on this side; as I live, there is that sweet fascinating fellow—his eyes fixed on our box!” Luckily for Augusta’s feelings, the change of her countenance was not perceived by her lovely cousin; but the moment she turned her eyes as she was directed, they discovered the amiable stranger, the idea of whose tenderness and elegance had never totally forsaken her memory. Her heart fluttered with a thousand pleasing reflections and interesting sensations. — Her

breath grew short, yet she knew not whether it would not be an impropriety to appear to recollect him. To prevent her eyes from straying that way was impossible, and every time she looked she dropped them instantly, on observing his constantly fixed on her with the most scrutinizing earnestness."

"Is he not beautiful as an angel?" cried Clara.

"I cannot look at him steadily," returned Augusta, "but I think he is handsome."

"How cold is that expression!" replied her cousin: "I would give worlds if he would come into our box."—Perhaps Augusta would have given her portion of the world for the same purchase; but she kept silent.

"I cannot keep my eyes off him," continued Clara: "I am absolutely dying for him, and yet, hang the fellow, he has not yet answered one of my attractive glances."

"What do you mean, Clara?" said Augusta. "How can you behave so improperly? What would the Major say? Would he like to have a woman, to whom he is so near being married, express herself with such warmth of a stranger?"

"Oh! that is quite another affair; serious connexions, and these little *égaremens du cœur*, are very different matters. I hope you do not think I am in love with Dalrymple?"

"I should be very sorry to think you did not prefer him to all the world."

"Ah! ah! my dear Augusta, you will know more of the world by and bye, and think and act as I do."

"God forbid!" cried Augusta, and added to herself, in the way of reflection, stealing at the same time

a soft timid look at the side box—"No, stranger as you are to me, while my heart feels this fluttering, yet pleasing sensation, on viewing thee, shall my hand ever be given to any one."—Whether the sentiment gave more expression to her eyes, or whether it was purely accidental, the stranger bent forward, as if by sympathy he had understood her secret, tender vow. She thought she saw his bosom heave with a sigh, and she had a responsive one instantly ready to return him. The play now lost one of its principal spectators; for no longer could it engage the attention of Augusta: she even involuntarily turned her talk oftener to Clara, and her eyes mechanically wandered each moment to the only object that interested her.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Clara, "he has left the box: I'll be hanged if he is not coming to our's."—Pleasing as part of this idea was to our heroine, she felt as if she should sink off her seat; her emotions even turned her sick. She exercised her fan violently, and took out some *eau de luce* to revive her spirits. She dared not turn her head round, though each moment wishing to do so, as she heard the box-door open, and some one coming down the seats: but she heard not the mellifluous sound of a voice that had never ceased vibrating on her ear, since first she was struck with its musical softness. She sat motionless, till she found a gentleman had seated himself immediately behind her.

"Happy," said a voice, which made her tremble, "happy am I, to have an opportunity of seeing the lovely Miss Monckley! and at the same time offering my apology for my unguarded behaviour, which I most sincerely repent of." She had turned her head

at the first part of the address, and her eyes encountered the vile Lord Glamore.

“My Lord,” she answered, “I want no apology ; all I wish is, that you would neither trouble me with them, or your company. I beg, my Lord, you will leave me ; you distress me very much. My dear mother,” turning to Mrs. Spencer, “pray request his Lordship to leave the box : I am quite overcome. Indeed I shall faint if he continues to persecute me.”

“What folly, my dear. His Lordship may feel shame and remorse for his ill-treatment of the daughter of General Spencer ; but you should triumph in his mortification.”

“Of General Spencer ! Have I then been guilty of offending the daughter of a man whom I so much esteemed ? Oh ! how I detest myself : I shall never be happy till I have made some atonement.”

“Yes, my Lord,” cried Mrs. Spencer, “this dear girl is the daughter of General Spencer. I have not the honour of your acquaintance ; but you must allow me to tell you, the relation my daughter has made of your unwarrantable freedom, requires the most marked apology. What can pass here is not sufficient.”

“Oh ! yes, indeed, it is,” cried Augusta, terrified at the idea of ever meeting him again. “I will freely forgive his Lordship, if he will never speak to me any more.”

“That lenity might be becoming enough in your former situation, as Augusta Monckley ; but demands a different arrangement as Miss Spencer. I beg, my dear, you will give me leave to resent an indignity to my family, as is consistent with my sense of it. I

shall avoid any altercation in this public place, in consideration of your Lordship's character and my own. I believe you know my address."

"Was ever any thing more distressing!" cried Augusta softly to herself. "Oh! would to heaven I had never come to this odipus play-house." But more mortification ensued to our poor heroine; for Lord Glamore continually was talking to her, would hand her sweetmeats, and shewed her the most marked attention; and towards the end of the play, she saw the stranger's eyes fixed again on her from the next box, which he had some time before entered. Her sensations became painful to her in the extreme. She anxiously wished the whole of the entertainment over. "Am I for ever to meet with mortification and disappointment in those pursuits I engage in with pleasing hopes!" she thought. "But I will assert my own right of acting as I please. My mother cannot judge of my feelings. She resents the indignity offered to her daughter. I am only alive to the offence which virtue and unprotected youth received through me. He is the object of my detestation. I cannot see or think of him without the utmost pain and terror. Well, then, let him make this apology that appears so necessary to her dignity, and then I hope never to be tormented with his odious presence. Why do I suffer such a wretch to put me in such disorder? I will be more myself; it is paying him too high a compliment to allow him to see the effect his presence has on my spirits." She then assumed a cheerfulness at that moment foreign to her heart, which she was more induced to do, as her mother whispered to her, "Nothing will

more keenly touch him than this apparent civility, or make our future contempt more conspicuous."

"Oh!" thought she, "it shall be conspicuous enough, if it rests with me to shew it."

The play being at last finished, and the boxes of course emptying fast, Lord Glamore most officiously went out to inquire for Mrs. Spencer's coach. Augusta, more at ease from his absence, now stood up, turning her back to the stage. A few minutes after the man she hated retired, her eyes encountered one who inspired very different emotions. He came just within her box. He still looked attentively at her; but there was a melancholy expression in his eyes and features that sunk deep into her heart. He did not offer to approach nearer, and there were still a great many people between them; but yet she plainly saw him, and heard him sigh frequently. A pensiveness stole upon her mind, and she could hardly repress the tear that gathered in her eye from trickling down her cheek. He frequently turned from the box to look towards the lobby. He cast one glance upon her, and then hastened out. The next moment his Lordship appeared with a servant of Mrs. Spencer's, who said the carriage was waiting. It so happened that Augusta came last out of the box. She could not dash by the people as Clara and the rest did. Her party being a little before her in the lobby, the stranger glided up to her. He seemed going to speak, when her mother said, "My Lord, I confide my daughter to your care." Augusta would have drawn back.

"Oh! my lovely girl," said Lord Glamore, "we shall lose our party, if you do not come forward," for

the lobby was much crowded. The dread of being separated from her mother, made her follow with alacrity. Lord Glamore left her one moment to hand Mrs. Spencer into the coach. In that moment the stranger was at her elbow.

"Oh, my God," he exclaimed, "what a sight is this?" The voice so dear to her remembrance, so thrilling on her nerves, and the expression of sorrow almost overpowered her. She knew not how she got into the coach, or hardly where she was; only this bitter reflection possessed her whole soul: "how must he despise me to see me in the company of a man, whose bad character he is undoubtedly acquainted with, and, perhaps, knows how much I ought to avoid him."

This poignant idea never left her. Under pretence of fatigue she retired from the supper-room, where there were several men, who had made an appointment at the play to spend the evening there. To her room she went, with her heart bursting with a new species of grief; but it was not of a nature to be relieved by tears, though they fell from her eyes in plentiful showers a considerable time. Whenever the parlour-door opened, she heard repeated peals of laughter; but although she had never experienced so much wretchedness before, she still felt a luxury in her sorrow superior to any joy such a riotous set, as she supposed the company below to be, could have, at any time, afforded her. She found they meant to stay late, therefore, she prepared to go to bed, with eyelids heavy with weeping, yet not inclined to lose the cause in sleep. Her grief was two-fold, or she would have condemned herself for being so much attached, as she could not be insensible she was,

to this amiable stranger. Sometimes she tried to think her tears fell from mortification of having been seen with Lord Glamore ; but she was unknown to all the world but to him alone, whom of all the world she wished to think well of her. She repeated his expression, "What a sight is this !" ten thousand times. Could the sight have occasioned such an exclamation, unless he had taken great interest in her ? She recollected each word he had uttered when they first met. In how impassioned a tone he had besought her to allow him to protect her. How zealous in her concerns, yet with all the timidity and delicacy, that proved at once the purity and reality of his professions, and what now must his thoughts be of her conduct ?

"I may never see him again : I wish not to see him ; but his despicable opinion of me wounds me to the soul. Neither will I see this wretch to whom all my distress is owing. I like not my mother's conduct and principles enough to be swayed by her advice ; I will judge for myself, nor be brought by any persuasions to act in contradiction to those fixed rules of propriety, I fear, I understand better than she does."

Towards morning her harassed spirits lost themselves in sleep ; but she rose pale and unrefreshed, and the same reflections occurred as soon as she opened her eyes. She found her mother alone, for the girls were gone out to breakfast, and spend the day at Richmond with a gay party. She wished not for company, but she dreaded having any conversation with Mrs. Spencer, wherein she was certain they should not agree : however, her mother neither took notice of her paleness, or led to any thing which could

recall the idea of what had passed over night. Augusta, a little relieved from her apprehensions, resumed a more cheerful aspect, and the old Lady being engaged with some trades-people, she went to her chamber with a much lighter heart than she had quitted it.

One of the footmen tapped at her door about three o'clock, and said his lady requested the favour of her company to air in the park, and the carriage was at the door; grown tired with her own thoughts, she readily complied with her mother's desire. The view of green trees and verdure, gave her great pleasure, nor did the variety of carriages impress her with less. It was a gay scene, and the exercise contributed to exhilarate her spirits, which were naturally of a cheerful kind, though not equal to "broad unlicenced mirth." In their second course in this fashionable line, she saw in a phaeton, with four mettled horses, pass quickly by them, the object of her tenderest contemplations. She was too much taken up with him, to attend to his liveries, even if they had been known to her. He had a companion of the fair sex, to whom he seemed earnestly talking. "He can be cheerful," said she, softly sighing to herself, "why then should I suffer corroding melancholy to damp my spirits? No, let me copy him." A great many gentlemen were in the park, some of whom came up and spoke to Mrs. Spencer, and amongst the rest, she saw at some distance, Lord Glamore on horse-back. He gave them a bow of recognition, but passed without further notice. In the return they again met the phaeton, and the driver looked full in the coach—they were so near, that Augusta plainly saw a rosy blush pervade

his features, and from the pleasing feeling it excited in her bosom, most likely her cheeks were crimsoned too. Mrs. Spencer chose to go out of the park when they came to the gate, so she saw no more of the phæton.

The mother and daughter dined *tête-à-tête*, and when they were preparing to go into the drawing-room, a servant whispered the former, who only said, "I will attend him directly." She desired Augusta to amuse herself for a little time, and she would send for her. Augusta went to her chamber, and there, with all the philosophy that usually belongs to young women of her serious reflection, she began to take herself to task, for suffering an absolute stranger, for such he was, and such he seemed inclined to be, to engage so much of her thoughts and attention. "It is plain he wishes not to improve an acquaintance began by accident, but which some circumstances have rendered interesting to me. My mother is by no means inaccessible, so that he might, with little difficulty, be placed on her visiting list, as she styles it. Why do I then so continually think of him? Alas! I fear it is involuntary, or why should I dream of him almost every night? but that proceeds from a weak indulgence of daily thought. I ought not to give way to such imbecility; it is unworthy of a mind capable of reflection, to have its ideas engrossed by perhaps an ideal object. He may be married to the lady whom he was driving—he was attentive to her—I saw not her face indeed; but what signifies her face, if she is beloved by him. It is from the idleness which I have fallen into, that such ridiculous thoughts occupy my foolish mind. I will send for my pianoforte; I will, I must employ myself."

CHAP. XVII.

DISAPPOINTED HOPES.

AUGUSTA received a summons to the tea-table ; on her entering the room, she started with dismay on seeing the hated Lord Glamore, who rose to meet her ; she seemed even to meditate a retreat. "Come hither, Augusta," cried her mother, "Lord Glamore has offered the most satisfactory apology to me. You must be well assured, my own dignity and your welfare have been consulted, in the pardon I have afforded him ; and I expect you will henceforth consider him as a man of honour, though he made, unknowingly indeed, so grand a *faux pas* in addressing the daughter of General Spencer, in a manner that can only be extenuated by his ignorance of your rank." Augusta was going to plead for her favorite position, that virtue should be respected in every rank, when Lord Glamore prevented her, by putting his knee to the ground, "Let me not find you inexorable, my dear Miss Spencer, to my sincere contrition." "I beg you will rise, my Lord," said she, with great emotion, and then, by chance, her thoughts recurred to the driver of the phaeton, and what were now his thoughts of her. "At my mother's request, I pardon all that is past ; but so many painful, acutely painful recollections rise in my mind, that I beg, I entreat I may never see you again. It is the only means of restoring me to the world's esteem and my own." "The

world's esteem," repeated Mrs. Spencer ; " what has the world to do with your actions ? and what loss of the world's esteem do you reckon upon ? you are unknown to the world, and will be so, 'till you are properly introduced. The interest of Lord Glamore with your cousin, Lord Spencer, may induce him to acknowledge you, though I have found it so difficult." " Whatever may be the consequence, Madam, I cannot indeed submit to receive any obligations from Lord Glamore." " You are of a strange implacable disposition, I am afraid, Augusta," who answered, very much shocked at her mother's expression, " I hope not, Madam, my forgiveness of Lord Glamore's insult was conditional. I only beg I may not be obliged to receive visits so utterly disagreeable to me." " Is it the province of a daughter pray," said Mrs. Spencer, her colour rising, " to dictate to me, to whom I shall open my doors ? please to recollect the obscurity from whence I have lifted you to elegant affluence ; and give me leave to be the best judge of who, or who not, I shall receive as visitors." " Better, perhaps," thought Augusta, " I had never entered those doors, than to be under the guidance of an indiscreet mother, so negligent of the delicacy due to her daughter." She was, however, prevented by Lord Glamore again falling at her feet, and with the most fervent earnestness, beseeching her to admit him at least as an acquaintance. She had not time to answer, for some company arrived, and the girls soon returned with their party, and Lord Glamore, among the rest, staid to supper.

For near a week not a day passed, but he was their visitor ; Augusta availed herself of the power she

had assumed, of frequently quitting the room—but often was she exposed to the persecution of his Lordship, who took every opportunity of addressing her in the tenderest manner, whenever Mrs. Spencer left the drawing-room; and when she one day reasoned on the glaring impropriety, to give it no worse name, of a married man talking in such a strain to a single woman, Mrs. Spencer laughed, and said, “The country misses are so apprehensive and so delicate, that they imagine every man who says a civil or tender thing must of course be in love with them. This pretty fancied fear, originates in consummate vanity. I swear, from your representation, I thought I should see a satyr, with horns, hoofs, and claws, instead of a man of fashion, who only conducts himself as other men of fashion do.”

This last very extraordinary speech of her mother's, confirmed Augusta in the opinion she had some time before adopted, that judgment and prudence were not the natural consequences of having lived long in the world, and that it was possible for some women at fifty, to have all the indiscretions of fifteen. How mortifying then to her, to be in the power, and under the controul of a woman, of whose principles she had most alarming doubts, and whose understanding she found so inferior to her own, swayed and led away by fashion and caprice—and if under any guidance at all, the slave of passion, unrestrained by judgment. She could not reflect, without bitter anguish, on the waywardness of her fortune, which had exposed her to a situation of so much difficulty. But waving all consideration of the censures she might incur, by appearing to act in opposition to her mother's

inclination, she steadily adhered, as much as possible, to her resolution of rejecting every offer of accommodation with her relations, through the interposition and interest of Lord Glamore. She was determined likewise, that, if she could continue to keep well with her mother till she came of age, she should certainly then have an establishment of her own. She wished it to be possible to chuse a guardian, but she knew not how to act for herself, and she was in that perplexed predicament, that she could find no one to advise with. Mr. Bendley, indeed, occurred to her recollection, and she blamed herself severely for having neglected that worthy man : but she had lost her free agency in every thing. She had repeatedly requested of her mother to allow her to send to him, even if it did not suit her to present him with the acknowledgment she had at first proposed doing. This desire of her's was, from some frivolous excuse, constantly procrastinated from time to time. Augusta often resolved to write to him ; but what could she say ? How make an appeal to him against her mother, when she had not even asked his counsel before ? She felt an averseness to begin a long and painful recital of her disappointed hopes and expectations in a trial to which he was a stranger, or, if he had even heard of it, he must be justly offended with her want of respect to his advice, by never having asked it in so momentous a concern, and would, with good reason, refuse to embroil himself in striving to extricate her from a dilemma which she had voluntarily brought herself into. The ardency and sanguineness of youth, she feared, would but ill excuse her conduct to him, who certainly had friendship

enough for her to have rejoiced at her success, although he might, on the failure of her hopes, as readily blame that precipitancy which had involved her in so much trouble.

She had still enough confidence in herself to believe that, left to her own judgment, she should act properly; but she had every thing to combat, in order to assert her natural right to conduct herself according to her own ideas of propriety—custom, prescription, and authority; the last she found her mother capable of exerting by most unpleasant methods, and as she found her respect for Mrs. Spencer diminish every day, so were her affections, by a natural gradation, sinking likewise. This lapse of duty to a parent she blamed in herself; but she still thought that she was in some degree justified by the pernicious use her mother made of the right which nature had given her.

Such being her daily and hourly reflections, they depressed her spirits, and rendered every occurrence she met with distasteful to her. She exceedingly pressed to be introduced to her relations, to plead her own cause with them, judging, with her accustomed good sense, that if they were not on good terms with her mother, it must either arise from a specific difference in their opinions, or that her mother's conduct, (and most imprudent she was aware it was, and probably had ever been,) must have occasioned this strange idea they had taken up of her being a suppositious child. Could she but have got a knowledge where they lived, she would have presented herself before them, have given them every proof in her power of her identity, and then left it with themselves

to allow her whatever they might think proper, making a formal restitution of the remainder of her father's property. If they were people of worth and character, she thought she should make an easy and most desirable purchase, by obtaining their countenance and friendship, even if she relinquished millions. Mrs. Spencer, affected to treat her as a mere child, whom it was not proper or necessary to consult; and yet her nieces, who were still younger, made their own parties, went out when they pleased, staid to the most unseasonable hours, and followed the bent of their own inclinations in every thing, seeming to be restricted in no one article but that of laying out money, while she was not permitted to stir out of the house, nor had even ever been informed what denomination the place went by, where the house was situated.

The extreme rigour of some part of her mother's behaviour, with as much carelessness of others, contributed to form a mystery, which, as she could not solve, only served to strengthen her doubts and perplex her mind, without discovering any clue to guide her to the right path : even had Lord Glamore been a single man, he would have been the object of her firmest reprobation ; but as he was married, what purpose could a mother propose in encouraging his daily visits to her only daughter, and allowing him, unreprieved, to address her with repetitions of his illicit passion ? A splendid establishment had professedly been the wish of Mrs. Spencer for Augusta. She had avowed it from their first meeting ; but how that could be affected by her present mode of conduct seemed inexplicable : but her painful cogitations were

interrupted by a circumstance still more disagreeable. Her mother came to her room to tell her she must prepare to go to Ranelagh that night, as the Spanish Ambassador gave a Gala Ball and supper on the recovery of the King's health. Augusta wished most heartily that some sudden privation of that blessing had seized herself, that she might have pleaded her excuse for staying at home. She, however, derived a little comfort from the idea that she had nothing proper to appear in, in that region of gaiety and brilliance. She pleaded her mourning, which, on such an occasion of festivity, would wear too *sombre* an appearance, nor, perhaps, would it be allowed.

"Oh! nothing is so easy to obviate as that," answered her mother: "In this town any one may be dressed as they please in a few hours. I shall give directions for the purpose." That subterfuge failing, Augusta then begged if she must lay aside her sables, that her mother would indulge her in having a simple dress of white crape.

"I beg not to be opposed," replied Mrs. Spencer: "I hope I am the best judge. You shall to-night be dressed according to my taste, and I request you, as a favour, not to offer any objection to my inclination." This request of a favour, bore so much the sound of an absolute command, from the tone of voice in which it was conveyed, that Augusta found that a severe altercation must take place, if on her side there had not been submission.

In the evening the whole paraphernalia was ready, and displayed to the astonished eyes of Augusta. The dress was made of crape, spotted with silver spangles, and edged with silver fringe, with the most

delicate blonde frill round the neck and sleeves. It was drawn as a *chemise*, and confined at the bottom of her slender waist by a zone of diamonds, with necklace, ear-rings, and a profusion of stars, of the same, for her head. "These jewels, my dear Augusta, shall be your's. I have added most of my own to them. I now see you," continued she, gazing delightedly upon her, "as my daughter should always appear."

To say that Augusta did not view her own lovely figure, thus adorned, with some complacency, would be giving her the character, which she little deserved, of a cold, insensible stoic. Every exertion that art could lavish, was used to embellish one of the most beautiful girls that was ever seen ; for that girl to have turned from the mirror which reflected the form of a Goddess, arrayed like a queen, would have shewn the dullest apathy, disgusting, and out of nature. A little vanity may be allowed the most virtuous and discreet, and as her ornaments, though numerous, were placed in the most exquisite taste, she really did contemplate herself with a great degree of satisfaction : a satisfaction, which, however, lost much of its force, and, indeed, was almost forgotten when she entered the drawing-room, and found Lord Glamore was to be of the party, and was given to understand, from his address to her, that he had presented the tickets.

"I hope," cried Mrs. Spencer, "that my daughter will consider the favour you have done her properly, and not frown on your attentions as she has too much lately."

"Your daughter is an angel, my dear Madam ;

never did I see such a blaze of beauty! It is cruel to call in the aid of foreign assistance, when her own native charms must render every man her slave. Oh! how many rivals must I expect to meet this night!"

"My Lord," said Augusta, haughtily, "I do not understand on what grounds you frame your alarm of meeting rivals."

"Oh! my sweet girl," cried he hastily, not chusing to see the air with which she uttered this expression, which he clearly understood, "how happy does that charming speech make me!"

"You have wilfully mistaken my meaning, and it becomes me to speak more plainly."

"Indeed it does not," said Mrs. Spencer. "Either, Augusta, you are my daughter, or you are not. I am exceedingly displeased with you, and may find an occasion to convince you of it." Augusta shrunk within herself, at the harshness of her mother; but felt very ill-disposed to thank his Lordship, who earnestly deprecated the anger of Mrs. Spencer, and made peace between them. Some company joining them, prevented Augusta saying any thing more. Her mother resumed her usual gay air, and said so many sprightly and agreeable things by way of compliment to her daughter, that her heart being naturally good, she pardoned and even forgot, what had passed. The carriages were ordered at nine, and, after about two hour's going a coach's length, and then stopping, they arrived to see the most brilliant spectacle that had ever been exhibited in this kingdom.

Augusta was almost fascinated by the *coup d'œil*. Ranelagh, in its simplest state, is apt to strike; but when thus embellished, gave her the idea of a

Mahomedan paradise. Her most lively imagination could never have formed the faintest picture of such a scene. Her eyes every where engaged, afforded her hardly leisure to examine each part, or to define the sensations with which her bosom was filled. Her person never could have looked more lovely, for she had the most attractive air of animation impressed on her features. Lord Glamore kept constantly by her side ; but though she apparently attended to his conversation, she did not know one word he said, so much were her eyes and thoughts engaged with what she saw. As they were coming from the supper-room, they found the avenues much crowded, as many were going in for refreshments. Her dress had been caught by a gentleman's knee-buckle ; it retarded her motions a few moments : but what were her feelings when she discovered him to be the stranger ? Her colour changed from pale to red, and back again as fast. Her bosom throbbed even to pain.

"There is an attraction, Madam, in you," said he, coldly, "which neither age nor youth can withstand." His manner of speaking discomposed her.

"Never mind tearing the trimming," cried she, in a hurrying tone, as if fearful of betraying her emotion by her faltering accents : "I shall be separated from my company."

"I would offer you my protection, Madam," he replied, "to find them, had it not been before rejected. I hope, however, you are happy in that you have chosen."

"Can I be otherwise ?" rejoined Augusta, piqued to the soul by the reproof and the air with which it was given, and snatching the train, hurried on, leaving

some of the fringe still attached to the buckle. Her emotions of countenance were very visible. Lord Glamore had that instant missed her—"My love," cried he, "do not again quit my arm." She was insensible to this speech, as well as to the action accompany it. She only seemed alive to the wish of getting away from the man, whose confirmed ill opinion of her had wounded her inmost feelings. When she reached her mother, she put her arm through her's, nor would quit her any more. The stranger passed many times, but she would not turn her eyes towards him. Once, when they were very near, and Lord Glamore had left them to speak to somebody, he glided up to her. He spoke not with his lips—they only breathed a piercing sigh; but his eyes were fixed on her with such an expression of softness and tender melancholy, that she forgot she had ever been displeased with him, and involuntary tears gathered in her's. She turned her head to look after him. Their eyes met again, for he had moved his body in the same direction; he even seemed in the act of coming up to her. "No, he despises me," she thought, and she hurried her mother on. All the pleasure of the scene before her now vanished. It was the novelty of the moment she found had amused, which, like "the baseless fabric of a vision," left nothing behind, but the tormenting thought of being despised by the only man in the whole world she wished to have esteemed her.

Lord Glamore now again joined them.—"Do you know," said he to Mrs. Spencer, "I have been most confoundedly taken to task for giving my tickets to you."

“ Really ! ” she answered, with a toss of her head.

“ Yes, by G—d, have I.”

“ Why, I own, I never saw less of my acquaintance in my life ; but it will not come to any serious explanation, I hope.” — “ Oh ! slugs and a saw-pit, I suppose,” he replied, gaily.

“ Oh ! pray my Lord,” she rejoined, “ Do you know who that young fellow is ? I have often met him, but have never yet been told who he is.” Augusta hoped she should now learn the stranger’s name, for it was of him her mother spoke ; but Lord Glamore leaning behind her, whispered so softly in Mrs. Spencer’s ear, that the utmost exertion of our heroine’s auricular faculty was useless.

“ The devil he is,” exclaimed Mrs. Spencer, and, laughing, added, “ I could not have applied to a better informant. I thought him a man of fashion, and was only surprised he should not endeavour to get on my visiting list.”

“ I will see if the coach can be got up,” said his Lordship.

“ Aye, do. I should not like to have any altercation take place just now.”

“ No, nor I, for one reason ; but I believe it must be noticed.”

Augusta not knowing what they meant, besides being possessed with her own thoughts, till she had fallen into a reverie, asked no questions. She would have been happy to have heard the young man’s name ; though she condemned herself for feeling any interest about him, yet his idea still haunted her, and whenever she found herself disposed to be angry with him for the contempt that his expression, coming from the

supper-room discovered, there never failed to follow upon it quickly, a remembrance of his former zeal, or the tender melancholy of his countenance that softened her displeasure, and melted it into compassion, pity, and secret, though permanent, affection. The warmth of the room had given Augusta a most intolerable thirst. She wished for some lemonade, the only liquor she had tasted, and begged Mrs. Spencer to go with her that she might procure some; but seeing the stranger, who it should seem she was continually doomed to meet, was at the table, she drew back.

“Allow me to offer you something, Madam,” said he, making way for the Ladies.

“I will thank the waiter for a glass of lemonade,” said she, not even looking at him.

“Who the devil is that lovely girl you are talking to, my Lord?” said a young man, very elegantly dressed.

“You had better enquire of the Lady with her,” he answered. “I thought I knew her once, but I was mistaken.” A sigh accompanied these words. The other then spoke very familiarly to Mrs. Spencer. She answered him in a very low voice, so that Augusta, had she attended, could not have over-heard their discourse; but, indeed, what she had heard from this Lord, as she found him to be, had sufficiently engrossed every faculty of her mind. He had taken the glass of lemonade from the waiter.

“Will you not accept it from my hands?” he said, with a softened tone. Her’s trembled so, that she could hardly carry it to her lips. She could not command even speech enough to thank him.

“She is an angelic creature, by heavens!” said the companion of his Lordship. “Why do you not improve your acquaintance with her; I cannot, for you know I am but just married.”

“Surely,” thought Augusta, “the manners and customs of the world are much altered since Mr. Monckley lived in it. Where is the respect which the men should pay to women of character? But what a world it is! I meet with no women I can myself respect, and all the men treat me in a style of unbecoming freedom.” She hasted from the table, and drew her mother with her: “Something shall be done quickly,” again she thought; “I will conquer my false pride, and write to Mr. Bendley. His counsel shall guide me, for to live another week in this state, I would not for myriads of worlds, such as this appears to me.”

The carriage had now got up, to which she was handed by Lord Glamore, who was envied, even publicly, for carrying off so divine a creature. He placed himself on the same side with her, and all his discourse was hateful to her ears. She, however, less apparently resented it, from the resolution she had taken of applying to Mr. Bendley. She thought it would make an intire breach between her and her mother; but, ardently as she had wished to have the protection of a parent, she saw abundant cause to repent she had ever taken pains to discover her family. Soon as they got home she retired to her chamber, when, in laying her ornaments by, “Alas! glittering baubles,” said she, “how freely would I resign you to possess the esteem of the world. The world!” she repeated, “I am unknown to the world. Let me not deceive

myself. It is too plain, I can mean but one person, whom my unguarded affections have constituted the whole world to me."

Our readers have, perhaps, long since anticipated the information we are about to give them, that the unfortunate Augusta had been most basely entrapped in a snare, laid for her by the infamous Lord Glamore, we will give them credit for their discernment. They may be persons who, having lived long in the world, could long since discover the kind of house where poor Augusta flattered herself she had met with an honourable asylum : but she, totally ignorant of this world, and its moral turpitude, could neither foresee, or guard against, a plan, laid with the utmost circumspection, and carried on with a degree of caution beyond her artless abilities to develope ; that she was more than dissatisfied with many things, we have seen ; but her dislike arose from her own chaste ideas of female purity, not from any very gross deviations from the apparent, and, we fear, approved, usages of the gay world.

The conduct of Mrs. Spencer had been, for a woman of her profession, uncommonly guarded. The hour was nigh ripe when she might throw off the mask, and shew herself in her true colours. Lord Glamore became every day more importunate for the grand crisis, which would put him in possession of the woman he languished to destroy. He and his vile accomplice sat up together an hour after the devoted victim had retired, where, over a bottle of champagne, after some difficulty in agreeing on the main point, they at length settled on a plan, which it appeared no human means could circumvent.

If our readers did not suggest the idea themselves, they will do well to peruse two chapters over again, while we will prepare another against they are at leisure to give that attention, we flatter ourselves, we deserve.

CHAP. XVIII.

A CONFIRMATION.

THE next morning Augusta passed alone in her chamber ; for, on hearing Mrs. Spencer was gone out to breakfast, she excused herself to the young Ladies from having been fatigued the night before, and took that meal alone.

With an aching heart, though with a mind resolved, she sat down to narrate to Mr. Bendley every circumstance of her present unpleasant situation, taking, most candidly, all shame to herself, for not having applied to him before she had advanced so far as she had done in directing her own affairs on the strength of her own judgment. Her letter was long and mournful ; her tears accompanied each line, and her earnest intreaties to see and act by his counsel, were repeated with the most heart-felt energy. When she finished, she recollected she knew not where to request him to send an answer. It was an awkward circumstance, and she did not like to ask the servant ; but it occurring to her, that when she received the letter from her mother, the address to which she was to

reply, was to be left at the Thatched House Tavern. She thought she had better request him to write thither, and, perhaps, might easier be certain of reaching her hand. She now rang the bell, and gave the letter to be put in the General-Post. The maid took it and leaving the room directly, Augusta began her usual ruminations, and calculation of time, when she could get an answer. These deep cogitations employed her hours till that of dinner-time arrived. Her mother being then returned, she attended her in the parlour and found her alone. The girls were gone out to dinner, and were likewise to spend the evening at some of the public places. Mrs. Spencer seemed in great good humour, and strove to conciliate that of Augusta, by shewing her every attention in her power. She voluntarily acquainted her where she had been, and that every thing was *entrain* for her being acknowledged properly by her relations, who were impatient to be introduced to her; and, notwithstanding she had so peremptorily renounced the interposition of Lord Glamore, it was solely owing to his Lordship that she would be indebted for the countenance of her father's family, over whom he had great influence. Happy as Augusta declared this information of being acknowledged by her family made her, yet she could not but lament that it could not be effected but through the medium of Lord Glamore.

“ You will still continue to view his Lordship in an unfavorable light; but he has many good points in his character, which I have discovered, as well as have been informed of, and I doubt not you will, before it is long, feel most sensibly how much you have been obliged to him.”

As this was one of the points in which the two Ladies were not likely to be of one mind, Augusta changed the topic of his Lordship's good qualities to make inquiries about her relations. Mrs. Spencer gave a very favorable account of them, which was listened to with the utmost satisfaction by our heroine. She anxiously wished for the time.

"They are singular kind of people," replied Mrs. Spencer, "and must have every thing their own way. I have engaged to meet them with you to-morrow evening: Lord Glamore will attend us."

"Oh, this Lord Glamore!" thought Augusta; "must I always be persecuted with his company?"

The Ladies were still *tête-à-tête*, and the hopes of being the next day introduced to her father's relations, had, in a great degree, tranquillized the spirits of Augusta. A loud knock at the door announced company, although the clock had struck ten some time, and they were preparing to go to supper. The door opened, and in staggered a figure, that by the star on his breast shewed him to be of nobility. A thin, meagre, old creature, that might have tottered from age, had he not been inebriated by champagne, and a vicious course of life.

"Damme, Charlotte, where are the girls?" he exclaimed; "I want a girl; I am in high spirits, damme!" Augusta had sprung forward to get out of the door, thinking this must be some maniac.

"For heaven's sake!" cried Mrs. Spencer, "hold your tongue, my Lord. What do you mean? You know the regularity of my house."

"D—n your house. Let me have a girl. Who the devil have we here? Oh! this is something new.

By heavens I will have her ;" saying which, he rudely caught hold of Augusta, and tried to pull her on the sofa.

" Unhand me, monster !" screamed out the terrified girl, and, exerting her strength, struck the noble Peer a blow in the face, and knocked out his glass eye.

He " d—d the little virago : " but she hardly staid to hear his curse, but flying up to her room, locked herself in, trembling, and almost ready to sink on the floor.

" Oh, my God ! " cried she, " what am I to think now of this house ? Oh ! that I could get from it—that I had never entered it ! "

A thousand recollections flushed on her memory, and gave her the most alarming fears of having been betrayed. Her mind was confused, and she walked backwards and forwards in the dark, her senses almost as much benighted. After some time she heard Jenny, the maid, who attended her room, pass by. She knew it was her from her singing, which she frequently accustomed herself to do, or she would not have ventured to open her door.

" Do me the favour, Jenny, to bring me a light ; I am almost terrified to death by a madman, I think he must be, who broke into the parlour an hour ago ! "

" A madman ! No, he may be a bad man ; for no other come here, I am sure, " said Jenny. " I will bring you a wax light directly. "

" Do, good Jenny, " replied Augusta, " for my apprehensions are such, that I can scarcely support myself. "

Jenny presently returned. " My mistress, " said

she, "has behaved so scrubily to me, that I do not care what I say ; but the short and the long is, that you will be ruined soon."

"Almighty heavens! what do you mean?" But before Jenny could explain herself, Augusta heard Clara laugh very loud in the next room. "Is not that Miss Barry's voice? I thought she was out."

"Out! No. She has got one of her fellows with her."

"What are you saying, Jenny? And what do you mean by telling me I should soon be ruined? For heaven's sake inform me! Here is a guinea."

"Thank you, Madam. I am sure that old covetous scrub would not give me a farthing, when, according to her orders, I gave her the letter you wrote to-day, though she promised me she would reward me for bringing any you might write."

"What did you give my mother my letter?"

"Your mother! God bless you; she is no more your mother, than she is aunt to the other two girls. She is a brimstone, that I know."

Augusta sunk on a chair, and almost overcome, seemed as if she should faint, but struggled against the weakness of nature with all the exertion of sense she was mistress of. It occurred first to her she might make a friend of Jenny: happily, however, the idea of being betrayed from a superior bribe, prevented her making the experiment. "You are very bold, Jenny, to talk thus to me. Should I speak of it to your mistress, you would lose your place."

"I don't care if I do: I can get as good as this any day in the week. I have a friend who can give me a character, or indeed I might starve, for few

people will take a servant out of a b—— house, and this is as rank a one as any in town : but you may do as you please, Ma'am, I have given you my notion of it, and you may repent neglecting it." Saying which she flounced out of the room.

Augusta locked the door after her. " Oh, merciful God ! protect me from this cruel snare ! Oh ! I too plainly see the whole. Infamous, most infamous, Glamore ! And, oh ! that impious wretch, to assume the character, the sacred character—of a mother, to destroy an innocent, unsuspecting creature ! But, alas ! what signifies complaining ? Something must be done, and done quickly. But, whither shall I fly ? No matter : no where but here can I be betrayed. All dangers I may meet with cannot equal this I am flying from !"

She heard Mrs. Spencer's voice, coming up stairs. She heard a man, who she thought spoke like the wretch from whom she fled. Mrs. Spencer said, " Do not talk so loud ; you may be content with Betsy to-night ; she will be almost new to you ? the other is sacred for some time ; you know I act upon honour, and she is the property of Lord Glamore. He has taken pains enough, and he shall have the first of her."

She could not hear his answer, but soon she found one of the chamber doors shut, and presently Mrs. Spencer approached her chamber ; she instantly retreated from the door, to the key-hole of which she had applied her ear, and glided softly within the curtains of the bed. " My love," said this pretended mother, " I want to speak with you."

" Pray excuse my letting you in, Madam ; I am just in bed." Her dread of seeing the wretch who

had betrayed her, suggesting the first deviation from truth she had ever uttered.

“ Well, it was only to tell you about this troublesome, foolish Duke : I am heartily glad you gave such a repulse to his boldness ; but he is so intimate with your cousins, that he thinks he may take the same liberty with those he is not so well acquainted with. I scolded him heartily, and sent him away.”

“ I rejoice to hear it. I wish you a good night, Madam : I am very sleepy.”

Mrs. Spencer paid her the same compliment, and went down into the parlour, saying, as she left the door, “ I shall sit up till your cousins come in.”

“ And is not this a strong confirmation of Jenny’s assertion ?” cried Augusta to herself. “ No, every doubt is removed of the character of this vile woman. What will become of me ? This house, whatever befalls me in the trial, I will most assuredly quit.” She then opened her drawers softly, and stuffed a little linen into her pockets, and wrapping her cloak about her, sat herself down to reflect what she should do, and how escape from this den of danger and destruction. “ Oh ! ’tis plain that it will be too late if I stay till to-morrow. The scheme of introducing me to my pretended relations points the crisis of my ruin at hand. Ill-fated Augusta ! Too credulous to believe what I wished to be true, how have I been deceived ! But should I be stopped in my attempt to get out of the house ? Oh, heaven ! pardon my rash resolve,” she continued, falling on her knees, and taking a pen-knife from her pocket-book,— “ Pardon a wretch, who, to preserve her honour, will rush unbidden into thy presence ! Yes, this will do,”

feeling the edge of it. "In one instant this can prevent all my future misery in this life, and I rest on the mercy of my God who knows my necessity." She gently opened her door to listen if any of the servants were in the hall. A single knock at the door drove her palpitating back again into her room. Some man came in; as the footman opened the parlour door, she heard Mrs. Spencer say, "Oh! Branscombe, is it you? I shall have no business for you to-night; my Lord will do all himself to-morrow."

"I am sorry for it," repeated a harsh hoarse voice: "I should have been in excellent order for breaking this young thing in." The door shut, and she distinctly heard the servant go down the kitchen stairs, pulling the hall door after him.

"Now or never," cried Augusta, "is my time. Oh, merciful God! protect me through this night, further, with thy strengthening arm, my weakness, and I will not fear what evil men can do unto me." With a quick, trembling, yet light step, she hurried down the stairs; terror seized her, lest she should be heard opening the door. Mrs. Spencer and Branscombe were talking loud. She hoped the sound of their own voices would prevent their attending to any little noise, yet even her own quick breathing alarmed her. Fortunately she saw the key of the parlour door on the outside. She had recollected to lock her own chamber, and quickly she turned the lock; then gently opening the hall door, she darted forward unknowing where to go; but rejoicing she had so far escaped from the infernal mansion of the vile Spencer. The clock went twelve. She walked as fast as she could. She got into a street where there were many

chairs and servants By the light of the lamps they saw her beautiful face, though pale as ashes.

“Where are you going, my pretty Lady, so late?” some cried. “What, cannot you meet with a companion?” “Oh, God!” said others, “I wish I could bid up to her price; she is a nice piece, by my soul.” The insults she received from these licentious wretches struck her with terror.

“My swate cratur, but do you want a chair now?” said a man to her.

“Yes, I do,” said she in a voice trembling with apprehension.

“And where will you be after going, my honey?”

“Any where, any where,” cried she, seating herself in it.

“Shall I carry you to the tavern hard by, or to a bagnio?”

“A bagnio! What is that?”

“Oh! be asey, my jewel; to be sure you be ignorant what a bagnio is.”

“Oh! carry me to the end of this street, and then I will tell you where you shall go.” The man took up the chair, and hurried off with her. The motion and closeness, with the agitation of her spirits, and the thousand perturbing fears of danger, but just escaped, and what she might yet encounter, all operating together, made her turn extremely sick. Her head and heart beat violently. Her ideas grew confused, and she felt her senses receding fast. Her giddiness increased, and she had all the horror about her of persons, who find they are going to have their seat of reason overturned. She fell forward, almost insensible, against the front of the

chair, and her head breaking the glass it rattled on the pavement.

“Bodderation on my soul now!” cried the first chairman, as he sat down with a great jolt, and lifted up the top, “What are you after being about? Oh, by Jasas, this is very pretty, faith! You break my windows, and then pretend you cannot spake.”

“What is the matter with the young Lady, my honey?” said the other man coming forward. “Has she taken a little too much of English whiskey? Or is she in a fit? Oh! by my soul, she has killed herself, and brought us into a fine hobble.” He opened the front, and lifted her up, for she seemed past all power of assisting herself.

“Oh, Christ! what can we do with her body, if she was quite dead?” cried the first, holding up his lanthorn to her face. “Oh, what a pretty girl she is! Do, pray, honey dear, do tell us where you would be carried. Come, now your swate eyes be open, you may spake, surely.” However recovered the poor unhappy Augusta might be in the idea of the chairmen, she only looked wildly about her, with the air of distraction. They had got to the end of St. James’s Street, and the men not knowing what to do, had sat themselves down on the poles, waiting quietly to see the event. At that instant two gentlemen were passing arm in arm.

“Oh! for the love of Christ,” cried the first chairman, “Pray, your honors, look at this poor cratur; I believe, on my conscience, she is a misfortunate girl of the town, and mayhap has been kicked out of some tavern, and we shall lose our fare by the bargain.”

“What is the matter?” asked one of the gentlemen.

“Pooh,” cried the other, “some trick of the girl’s you may be certain. You hear what she is.”

“If she is unfortunate, she has at least a claim to pity,” replied he who had first spoken, “and if I can assist her I will.”

“Why then success attend your knight errantry, my Lord. I am now a sober fellow, and must go home to my wife. Good night!”

“Ah! if she could but spake now, look if her pretty face would not well reward your honour,” holding up the lanthorn.

“Oh, most merciful God!” exclaimed the gentleman, “it is she herself! How came she here? Where did you bring her from? My soul is on the rack. Oh! speak to me, lovely angel! Where, where, did she come from?”

“Oh! I’ll be d—d if I can tell your honour. She plied my partner and I.”

“Where was she going to?”

“I wish she would be after telling us. She bid us fetch her to the end of this street.”

“My God, she bleeds! She is wounded!” and kneeling on the pavement, earnestly looking in her pale face, and seeing her handkerchief covered with blood, “Where does this blood come from? Oh! tell me.” She kept waving her head backwards and forwards, and staring wildly, exclaimed, “It comes from my heart,” and crossing her arms over her breast, sunk on his shoulder.

“What can I do with her?” he cried, almost frantic. “Is there any house open, where we can carry her safely? I mean a house of reputation.”

"Oh! no: Lord help you, I knows of none."

"Stay," he cried, "let me think," and, after a short pause, "Yes! that, perhaps, may do. Here is some mystery; but let her be what she will, in this situation she demands succour. Can I send one of you? Oh! no, that will not do. My good lads, here is a guinea for you. Take care of this poor lady: I will find some house to receive her, and will return to you in all haste. I charge you do not let her escape from you: I would not miss this opportunity for the universe." He raised and placed her in as easy a posture as he could, and then hurried away to find some asylum for his unhappy object.

The blood that had so much alarmed her kind assistant, had fallen from her nose, and was as much the effect of the agitation of her mind, as from the slight blow she had against the window; but the discharge was of infinite service in the restoration of her senses; for a few moments her ideas were confused and unconnected; returning reason now took place.

"Why do you stop, men?" said she. "Do, pray, carry me farther."

"No, the jontleman said we must stay here till he came back."

"What gentleman? I know no gentleman."

"Aye, my honey, but he knows you though; and he is a ginerous jontleman, and a Lord into the bargain, and he would not lose you for the world, and so we promised to stay till he came back to bring you to some house."

"Oh! for the love of heaven," cried she, "let me come out. Do not, oh! do not, for mercy's sake! let me again fall into that wretch's hands."

“ But we must stay as he ordered us.”

She clasped her hands together: **“ Oh! succour a poor helpless woman, if you are Christians; I will reward you, and may all your former sins, for this good act, be fully absolved.”**

“ Why, my dear cratur, but you are not a priest, are you? What will father Reilly say, if you go about to absolve folks? He will be after ordering penance for you.”

“ She is an angel, by my soul, as his lordship said,” cried the other, **“ and it pities the heart in my body to see such a pretty girl so distressed! Don’t cry so, my dear; for if my name be Dennis Macready, I could cry for company too; and whatever father Reilly may say of the matter, I do think a good action may as well be done by an angel as by a priest.”**

“ Oh! but I am glad to my soul the priest does not hear you, though, it would cost you your best fare this blessed day, to get him to make peace with you and mother church, besides the whole crew of saints on your back.” Augusta still continued her earnest prayers, invoking them by all their hopes of happiness hereafter, to assist her in escaping from the vilest of men.

“ Nay, but if I do it, it is purely for the love I bear to a pretty girl; for as to the matter of hereafter, if I can but settle it with father Reilly, I am sure of a pretty snug place in t’other country, my honey.”

“ Oh! but you are losing time. Where can I go to be safe?”

“ You have not yet told us yourself now;” but as you can spake, why will you be after holding your tongue?”

“ I know not where to go ! I am the most unfortunate, undone wretch ! I have no home—no one to shelter me under their friendly roof !” Her tears, and the loss of blood, had perfectly restored her reasoning faculties, and, after a moment’s deliberation, it occurred to her, that her best way would be to get out of London by some of the stage coaches, and, as she knew not any place but the West of England, she begged the chairmen to carry her to some inn, where the western stages went from.

“ Why you may be in the Bath coach in an hour or two,” cried Dennis.

“ Carry me safe there,” said she, rejoicing at the idea, “ and I will give you a guinea each, and pray for you as long as I live.”

“ God bless you, my pretty dear,” replied Dennis; “ and I doubt not but the prayers of such a swate girl will do us good. Lord, you are as far before anybody I have seen since I came from Limerick, as St. Patrick is before a spalpeen. Come, Pat, take up, and let us give this rascally Lord the go bye.” The mind of Augusta being now more relieved than it had been for some hours, she found not the motion of the chair so disagreeable to her. She drew the curtains round her, and by the help of some eau-de-luce, which she recollected to have in her pocket, kept up her spirits tolerably. The men walked as fast as they could, till they arrived safely with her to the inn-yard. Some coaches were just setting out, but to different parts of the country. Augusta preferred the Bath stage, because she should not be much out of the road to the place alone she was acquainted with. Most gladly did she reward the honest Hibernians for their fidelity,

and gave them beside a crown to drink, hoping by that means to detain them, and so elude the search which she feared Lord Glamore would make, when, on his return, he should miss her and the chairmen.

A very decent looking chamber-maid was up at the inn, who informed her the Bath coach, for four passengers, would set off at that hour, and now it was near two. Her pale looks, and melancholy air, seemed to impress this woman with tenderness ; she therefore begged Augusta to lie down on a bed, and she would take care to awaken her ; at the same time brought her water to wash her face and hands, which were soiled with stains of blood, pressing her too to take some warm wine and water. All these little attentions melted the heart of Augusta, and drew tears of gratitude from her lovely eyes, and the sweetest and most elegant acknowledgments for such unexpected kindness in a stranger. Having made her appearance a little more decent, and taken some refreshment, she rested her weary head till the time the coach was ready to set off.

The idea of having so fortunately escaped from the infamous Spencer's filled her pious heart with praise and thanksgivings to the Almighty, who had thus aided her endeavours. To sleep was impossible ; but such a load of sorrow and apprehension had been taken off her bosom, that she felt no wish to lose her present composure in sleep. In the coach were two plain looking men, and a lady who were going down to Bath to see a sick friend. The morning was fine, but rather cold, a circumstance that benefited Augusta's wish of concealment, without occasioning suspicions of any cause for it in her companions, the

lady being the first to propose drawing up both the windows. No occurrence happened on the road, more than common to all travellers. The reflecting turn of mind in our heroine, with the matter she had for exercising it, made her very silent: and now that the hurry of her spirits a little subsided, she found herself hot and cold by turns, and, by several indications, feared she should be ill; but her former disappointments prevented her saying any thing of her indisposition to the company, and when they arrived at Bath, they took their leave with that cold indifference that strangers generally feel towards those they never expect to see again.

A number of chairmen were ready to offer their services; but as Augusta knew no more how to direct them, than she had done the honest Hibernians, she thought it the better plan to request having a bed prepared at the inn where she stopped. Her own good sense often supplied the place of experience, therefore, although she knew she could not eat, she ordered a chicken and pint of white wine: a glass of the last she took with a bit of bread, and then retired to rest, endeavouring to avoid all thought, as well as she could, till the next day.

And now, having so happily rescued our fair heroine from the snares laid for her, we will leave her to the repose she so much wanted, and take another course ourselves—in some degree, to inform our readers how the subtle web was woven, which entangled the unsuspecting Augusta, and so nearly completed her ruin.

They will remember, that the vile Spencer had enquired of the equally abandoned Lord Glamore, who the young stranger was? and that his answer

had been given in a whisper ; but which we, having prodigiously fine ears, over-heard — “ He is my only son.”

We flatter ourselves he has already made a little impression even in the short acquaintance our readers have had, and that they will rejoice to hear he was the exact opposite of his vile father in every thing, and whose only reason to wish his return from Geneva, where he was finishing his studies, arose not from paternal tenderness to have his company, but to prevail on him to join in cutting off the entail of Malvern estate, that it might be sold to pay debts, contracted by the most vicious and profligate extravagance.

We shall, with the leave of our friends, take them back to the period of Lord Malvern’s seeing Augusta on the rock : but it would be profanation to so elegant and worthy a subject to connect him with the wretches we have seen in this chapter ; therefore we will end this immediately, that we may trace the sweetest and noblest of passions, when grounded in a heart both virtuous and respectable.

CHAP. XIX.

RETROSPECTION.

OBEDIENT to the mandate of his father, Lord Malvern lost as little time as possible in adjusting his affairs abroad ; and learning from the letter which recalled him to England, that he should find Lord

Glamore at Malvern Park, he crossed the country from Dover, and arrived the day after that infamous nobleman and his chaplain had been circumvented in their open schemes of seducing Augusta, and had set off for London, to call in more powerful, but not more wicked, auxiliaries. They might want heads to plan, but their hearts and hands "were swift to do mischief."

Not finding his father at the park, Lord Malvern would have directly proceeded to London, but his servant was taken ill, from the fatigue of travelling so expeditiously, and he wished to give him at least a day or two to recover; and to amuse himself, he had one evening taken a walk to the beach, where, as has been related, he discovered our heroine; and we have likewise mentioned the effect her beauty, situation and sweetness of manners had upon his heart.

The next morning he flattered himself, he should get some opportunity of again beholding a woman, in whose interest he took so decided a part, and which had been greatly strengthened by having heard her character, and recent misfortunes, yet not without some degree of pain, when he probably thought all her tender affections must be buried in the grave with the lover, who was so soon to have been her husband. He however was frustrated in his scheme of seeing her, by the impertinence of the lawyer, who hunted him about, 'till the chaise had conveyed Augusta, whither, he knew not. Finding it not possible to gain the information he wanted, and for which he had the most generous motives, he sat off for London, leaving his servant to follow him when quite recovered; and in the mean time, to endeavour to learn where the

lady had retired. As the livery of the groom was the same as Lord Glamore's, that circumstance gave rise to the opinion, that it was he who made such trials of David's honesty, by ordering his servant to tempt him with a bribe.

Lord Malvern found his father surrounded with creditors to get money, and Jews to procure it, as usual, at a ruinous interest. Though possessing the utmost filial duty to his father, he could not help remonstrating gently on the circumstance of cutting off the entail of all that remained of the family estates—to which he was influenced by his mother, who saw that her son would be left destitute of patrimonial fortune to support his title, by his too easy acquiescence to his father's imprudent measures. If this knowledge of his father's extravagance gave pain to Lord Malvern, it was sweetened by the hope, that his being involved in so much intricate business, would prevent all farther machinations against the peace and honour of Augusta; and likewise by his complying with the wish of Lord Glamore, of selling Malvern estate, in return he might gain his consent (if he could obtain the lady's) to his future union with Augusta. Lady Glamore pleaded strongly for her son's refusal to his father's request; and to accommodate matters between them, it was at last agreed on all sides, that three months should elapse before the affairs relative to it should be brought to conclusion. The various meetings, consultations, and altercations on this subject, took up some time, which, however, gave Lord Malvern not so much uneasiness, as he was convinced nothing could be done on Lord Glamore's part, as he even did not express a wish to go

down to Malvern. Thus the time stole on; but finding his servant made no progress in his search, and by accident recollecting the name of Mr. Bendley, and his friendship for Augusta, he resolved to go down to Malvern, and pay that clergyman a visit, when he would open his heart to him and beg his influence to prevail on Augusta to receive his visits on the most honourable footing. With this intention he was travelling, when it may be recollected, he met the object of his journey with Mrs. Spencer. He was convinced it was Augusta he saw, and stopping the drivers, he called to his valet, who was on horseback, asking him if he took notice of two ladies who had just passed them in a chaise and four. This valet had been at Malvern with his young Lord, and happened to have seen Miss Monckley in the morning of that day his master had.

“Did you take any particular notice of them, Wilson?”

“No, my Lord, only it struck me that was the carriage for which relays of horses were ordered, and made it so difficult for me to procure any for your Lordship.”

“I cannot help thinking—nay, I am certain, the young one is the very woman I am in search of.”

“Oh, no; my Lord, you must be mistaken, for I will swear to the old one being as errant a bawd as lives in London.”

“Impossible,” cried Lord Malvern.

“Oh, God bless your honour, my last master, Lord D——, used to go there frequently; Lord! I knew her when she was kept by Lord Charles ——, I saw

in a moment who she was, and my looking steadfastly at her, prevented my noticing her companion."

"I will return," cried Lord Malvern, "I am prepossessed with the opinion of that lovely girl being in the chaise, though convinced you have mistaken the other for the infamous woman you speak of."

"We shall never be able to get horses to go on," said Wilson, "and I doubt not, my Lord, if you pursue your journey, you will hear of the lady you wish to see, being safe in this country." The persuasions of Wilson prevailed, and Lord Malvern ordered the post-boys to proceed. As they were going slowly up a long hill, Lord Malvern perceived a woman flaring along the road, whom he instantly knew to be the servant that belonged to Augusta. He stopped the chaise, and hastily jumped out, "My good woman," said he, "do you not recollect me?"

"Aye, sure I does."

"Where are you going to?"

"Oh, not many mild off, Sir."

"Where is your lady? How does she do?"

"O Lord! we have had brave work sen we saw you. There is my dear Miss Augusta, as happy as a queen with her own mother; well, I always thought she would prove a great lady at least. She has discovered her family at last, and I do think I helped her a bit too. A fool may sometimes hit on what a wise person misses, I sees that plain enough; so she is gone to Lunnon with her dear mamma, and I be going to see one, who will be main glad of my company, that he will. And my dear lady gave me a power of things to begin house-keeping with-al, for

she will have no lack of nothing now ; for her mamma is a vast rich body, and will give her a great fortin, that she will."

"But how did her mother discover her?"

"Why miss put it all in the Lunnon papers, and so she had a letter, describing all the baby things, as if she had seed them with her own eyes, and gave the very subscription too of the little girl's person, and how the cradle was made, and all sorts of things she had on, and all about 'am. So then Miss Augusta looked all over her treasure, as she called it, and found them the perfect moral—and then she cried, and almost fainted ; and then a sweet-looking lady come. Oh laws heart ! how moving it was to see them—they was so glad, and yet they cried too, main fast, and so I cried for company, though I was as glad as they could be for the hearts of 'um. And then this blessed day they set off for a fine house at Lunnon : and so I am a going to see Farmer Smith, as is to be my spouse, next week that ever comes, and so that's all your honour," dropping a bobbing courtsey. "I wish you very happy," said his lordship, giving her some money.

"Now, Wilson," he added to his valet, "I think you will be convinced that I was right, and that you are mistaken."

"I wish it may prove so with all my soul, my Lord," answered Wilson. "But if ever I saw that d——d old harridan, it was her in the chaise ; beside, I know her servants' liveries." Well, well, let it be as it may, I shall most assuredly return to London ; at any rate, I have no further business in this road. My

lads, drive me back again to the last stage we came from."

"Lord bless your honour, the poor beasts are quite blown with coming up this cursed long hill ; if so please you, we might as well go forward—you may light of horses at the Plough, and we be'n't far to that now." Lord Malvern saw but little difference between returning immediately, and going three or four miles further, which addition would have made it a still greater fatigue for the horses to measure back. He strove to make the boys of his own opinion, but could not teach their thick skulls to comprehend him. Indeed, there was something added to their natural stupidity ; they were desirous of getting some money from his Lordship, over and above what is commonly given to drivers. And they foresaw a double advantage, because he would pay them before he would know whether he should be supplied with fresh horses ; and they determined to exercise their ingenuity to prevent his having any other than theirs, by which means they should secure to themselves a further douceur for carrying him again over the same ground. He found he must comply with their wishes, and in consequence was detained, after travelling four unnecessary miles, 'till the horses should have eaten their corn, and the boys had regaled themselves with the best the house afforded. Lord Malvern took Wilson in the chaise with him, as the fatigue of following on horseback was too great, and thus they returned to London, with all the expedition they could use. They had traced the chaise, in which were the ladies, from every inn, and at the last stage Lord Malvern flattered himself

he should find where they were to be carried in town, but to his mortification he learnt, that the lady's own horses had met her at Brentford, and thus the pursuers were thrown off their scent, as of course no directions were necessary.

Tired, fatigued and disappointed, Lord Malvern returned home to his father's house, determined to begin a search after Augusta the next morning, yet still most ardently hoping, and indeed flattering himself, that Wilson must have been totally mistaken in his supposed knowledge of the elder lady.

After having strolled about a long time, he met with a friend, with whom he had been sometime acquainted in his travels, and they walked together, the morning being very fine, into Hyde Park. Lord Malvern observed a very elegant carriage, and in it thought he discovered, as little as her person had struck him, the same lady he had seen with Augusta in the chaise. He eagerly asked who she was. "Can any thing," returned his friend, "more strongly prove you have been but a short time in London? why it is the famous——, and two charming girls with her! they seem as if they were going to walk; shall we join them? but I believe I must decline it too, for as I am to be married to-morrow, I think it will not be prudent to be seen in such company, as most likely Lady Mary S—— will be in the park this morning." This information had a visible effect on the countenance and spirits of Lord Malvern. However, he examined the party very minutely. He was convinced he should now know any of the ladies, wherever he might again meet them, but still flattered himself he should find that Augusta was unknown to such women as he plainly, by the

loud laugh and bold staring, saw that they were. His mind perplexed with doubts, could receive no pleasure from the lively sallies of his gay and happy friend, who now joined Lady Mary S——, therefore, wishing him a good morning, he retired from the Park melancholy and dissatisfied.

When Wilson came to comb his hair, "My Lord," said he, "I was right after all; I have been making enquiries, and find the old Jezebel returned last night from a long journey into the west, and has brought the loveliest girl with her that ever was seen." "Death to all my hopes!" cried Lord Malvern, starting up and almost overturning his valet.

"Do you know for certain what you say?"

"Oh yes, my Lord, I will swear to the truth of my intelligence."

"Then must Augusta have been deceived! oh, that innocence of countenance could not have concealed a depraved mind; some uncommon artifice must have been used to betray her to the power of such a woman. What can be done? could I but see her, I would learn from her own lips, if with her consent she is an inmate of that infamous house; and if she says she is happy, why then I will think no more of her if possible."

"Should you go to the old devil's, my Lord, she is so sly, that perhaps you would never be able to get a sight of the lady."

"No, I will go to every public place; I may happen to see her, and then I will speak to her." Thus resolved he went early that night to Ranelagh. Again he saw Mrs. Spencer, and her party of nymphs, but no Augusta with her. Every morning he went to the

Park, and almost every morning saw the same set, and still without Augusta. Again fresh hopes arose, that so great a misfortune as finding her in such society, would be spared his anxious bosom. But the evening he saw her at the play, all his hopes were overthrown, and grief and disappointment succeeded in their place. "But I will speak to her," he cried to himself, and left the side box to go to her's. As he was on the point of entering it, he saw his father; he retreated, and opened the next box door, and then all his blood ran chilling to his heart, on seeing Lord Glamore placed close behind her, talking earnestly. His jealous fears made him fancy she heard him with complacency. He met her eyes when she turned towards the box. The confusion of her countenance on seeing him so near, confirmed him in the belief, that it arose solely from her being detected in a situation of intimacy with a man of such libertine principles as Lord Glamore.

The presence of his father restrained him from speaking, still he was in hearing. But on her being a moment later in quitting the box, he had just time to make the exclamation we have before noted, of, "My God! what a sight is this!" The change of Augusta's countenance (still pre-possessed as he was, that she had put herself under Lord Glamore's protection with her own consent) served to strengthen his suspicions. "Alas!" thought he, "how soon will even that shadow of shame be lost from the fairest face in the world. O virtue, virtue! where wilt thou fly, if thou art dislodged from that lovely bosom?"

He drove his mother the next morning, in a new phaeton he had purchased into the Park, and there

were his eyes again tortured by seeing the still adored Augusta with the infamous Spencer. He saw too the most familiar bow of recognition which his father made, who was in the Park on horseback. He had preserved a strict silence of his attachment to Augusta, both to his mother as well as father, wishing first to establish an interest in her bosom, not doubting of obtaining their consent to his projected union. His mother doated on him with the most unlimited affection ; and as his father expected so great a sacrifice from him, he could not doubt of his acquiescence, even though it should militate against his own illicit passion, which he trusted was now subdued. These had been his reflections before he set off for the west ; and now all his bitterest fears were confirmed ; he could not speak of the attachment which corroded his heart, and blighted all the gaiety of his countenance. He watched every turn of his father's face, if haply he might discover what passed in his mind. He was continually now from home, and had even slept out more than once. Oh, what nights of torture were they for Lord Malvern ! He pictured such images to his fancy, as almost drove him to distraction. How often did he recall to his imagination the lovely angelic form, lifeless in his arms, whom he contemplated as he would a dying saint ; and now, that same form, stained by vice, and rioting in the guilty embraces of a married man—that man too his father !

On the morning preceding the gala at Ranelagh, he went to Jefferies the jeweller's, to purchase a sword ; Mr. Jefferies was just placing some diamonds in a case, to be carried home. He displayed them to

Lord Malvern; whom he did not know, as proofs of the superiority of his taste in setting jewels to the best advantage.

"These are for some blooming bride, I suppose?" said his Lordship.

"I am sorry to say," answered the jeweller, "they are for an impure. If you are at Ranelagh to night, you will see them. I do not know the lady, but she is kept by a nobleman, and what is worse, he is married. But such things are too common in these days to be remarked, though they are to be lamented. Look at this zone, which is to embrace the fair Venus. I do not think it can be matched for brilliancy or execution, any where. I have made the most I could for the purchase, the whole being three thousand pounds; and I may stay a good while too for payment, as I know his Lordship is deep with the Jews."

Lord Malvern did not pay much attention to what was said. He purchased an elegant cut steel sword, and a pair of dress knee-buckles—nor, 'till he saw Augusta dressed out in these very jewels, did he think of looking for them, or even about them. Now every doubt was removed; for could any woman accept of diamonds of such, or any value, from a married man, without having paid for them with her honour? "How have I been deceived by that look of pure innocence?" he said to himself. "A libertine mind is enclosed in that fair frame. I abjure from this moment all thoughts of her. Debased as she is, she is below the regard she once inspired." Observing how much she was gazed on by the men; "Aye," cried he again to himself, "ye are calculating in how few months she may become the property of any of

you—common to you all. Oh, my God! and is it possible that that woman should have been the object of my pure adoration! Why cannot I look on her with almost devouring eyes, as they do? No; her beauty, her form, all lovely as it appears, shrinks me with horror—for is she not the prostitute of my own father? Could I receive rapture from venal charms; her's are for ever interdicted. Connected with my father! Oh! what misery is there in that thought."

Soon after the little *embarrass* happened in coming out of the supper-room, the haughty air with which Augusta snatched her train away (and he forgot the contempt with which he had spoken, and had excited that pique in her) made him conclude that she had even already lost all sense and remembrance of her former virtue and gentleness, and would be soon as abandoned as the girls he had seen with her at the play. When he met her again at the table where were the refreshments, his friend, the new-married man, was with him, who, it may be remembered, had some conversation with Mrs. Spencer in whispers. He inquired who that lovely girl was?

"Is she not an angelic creature?" said the vile Spencer: "but why do I tell you about her? You have seceded, and are married: however, by the time you are tired of your wife, she may be disengaged from her present friend: she is the best feather in my cap; a few such would quite set me above the world." What did not Lord Malvern suffer when his friend related the above discourse, though thoroughly convinced before, yet every fresh confirmation struck daggers still deeper in his wounded breast.

"And shall I," cried he, indignantly, "make

myself a beggar, and part with all my patrimony, to enable this cruel, this base father to continue in such vile courses? What must he have practised to triumph over such innocence? Who knows but that force and violence first subdued her? But she is now happy; she confirmed it with her own lips. Yes, let vice, triumphant vice, be happy, for virtue is wretched!" He did not get home till four in the morning; but his father returned not till seven. The hours had been counted with agony by his unhappy son. The bitter reflection of how Lord Glamore had passed those hours, banished all sleep from his eyes, as it had every shadow of comfort from his heart, which still was too much devoted to Augusta to feel any peace or ease. His situation was peculiarly distressing; no alleviating thoughts accompanied it. All his hope was of forgetting there was such a woman in the world, but while she mixed with every idea, that was impossible. In his own bosom too were all his anxieties concealed. He could not enjoy the consolation of sharing them with any one. He could not stand the ridicule he feared he should incur from his friend Lord L—. And to his mother he could not communicate the grief that preyed on his vitals, as he should increase her own, by telling her of this fresh violation of the marriage vow of her husband. He could not revenge the cause of injured innocence, even if she had not consented to her own destruction, for the violator was his father. In this usual perplexity of mind he passed the night, and with the morning again betook himself to his daily employment of going wherever he expected to meet his misery.

At night there was a masquerade at the Pantheon.

He went first to both play-houses. He saw nothing of Augusta, nor did he see his father. He then returned home, and found Lord Glamore did not intend going to the Pantheon. Again he strolled from Portland-Place, and meeting his friend Lord L——, they agreed to look at the company who were going to the masquerade; and then he would accompany Lord L—— home to his house to sup. In their way thither they remarked how empty the streets were, the Pantheon having engaged all the common people to see the masques. This had proved a fortunate circumstance to the poor frantic and fainting Augusta, and preserved her from insult. The gentlemen were passing the end of St. James's Street when the chairmen were remonstrating with Augusta for having broken the glass window. The occurrence must be fresh in the memories of our readers. Lord Malvern, from his native compassion, had gone to the object in distress: but what was his astonishment, to see that object his still loved Augusta! His thoughts were all confused—his conjectures were so rapid and inconclusive, that he knew not what to think; but the most powerful was, the sight of Augusta wounded, as he thought and in distress. How she came in that distress he could not learn, but he was determined to protect her from greater. He wished to break through her connexion, infamous as it was, with his father. He would have given worlds for some asylum to have placed her in. Stranger as he was in town, he could not think of any place of safety to carry her to. At last it occurred to him, there was an old servant of his mother's, who kept a public house not far from them. After giving

the strictest charge to the chairmen, enforcing it too with a retaining fee, he flew on wings of haste to Mrs. Parsons, and luckily found her house open. In three words he told his purpose, requesting her to follow him directly. Then he hastened back to the same place. But what was his disappointment when he missed the chairmen and the chair! He cursed his own folly for not having staid with it till she had recovered her senses. The whole night did he wander about, in hopes of meeting, at least, with the men, who, he thought, he should recollect. The next day he went to the Chair-office, described the men as well as he could, but could learn nothing of them. He then, as a *dernier resort*, was determined to apply at the house of Mrs. Spencer. He recollected that it was possible, being by some accident separated from her party, might occasion the fright of Augusta; that when she came to herself, she might be able to tell the men where to go, and they had carried her back to the house of that infamous woman.

Mrs. Spencer received him with great civility, assured him she had often noticed him, and hoped she should have the honour of his acquaintance,—“I will give you my list,” said she, “in which I shall be happy to have your name enrolled. For such a sum,” pointing it out, “you have the freedom of the house when you please. Allow me, my Lord, to place your name here.”

“Excuse me, Madam, my business at present is of a different nature. I am come to inquire after a young lady, from whose former character, I must believe she has been artfully seduced into your power,

and led to ruin. I shall only point her out to your recollection, by saying I saw her with you at the Ranelagh Gala."

"Oh, Sir!" she answered, with great effrontery, "I can stand your test. Pray, my Lord, what do you know of that young Lady?"

"I thought I had known an angel," said he, "when I first saw her; and it must have been some diabolical schemes that could have ruined so much apparent innocence."

"Why, you have answered yourself, my Lord, in one word. Apparent innocence? How easy is it for a woman to appear innocent and virtuous that has never been tried. I know not by what right you make the inquiry of me. I have done nothing that the laws of gallantry will not justify. I have given a beautiful girl a chance of making her fortune, at the request of a noble Lord."

"Noble! rather base."

"I should think, my Lord, it did not become you to say so of all men in the world."

"Do you know me, then?"

"Oh, yes! perfectly: but come do not be cast down; I can shew you some delicious girls that will be proud to amuse your Lordship."

"Can I see the lady, and have ten minutes private conversation with her?"

"Not at present; she is engaged."

"Is she in the house? And will you allow me to write one line to her?"

"That, Sir, is taking a liberty I should not refuse to an acquaintance."

“ Did you not say you knew me ? ”

“ Yes, I know who you are ; but I call no one my acquaintance who has not paid me my fees.”

“ Well, I mean only to be an honorary member of this honorable house,” and throwing down five guineas, “ will that constitute me such ? ” She took up the money with great *sang-froid*.

“ You are a very extraordinary man for one of your years. Shall I see you to-night ? ”

“ Yes, if you will let me see this lady.”

“ I cannot promise ; she is particularly engaged. You must needs think such a girl is much sought after.”

“ Is it possible in so short a time ? ”

“ Oh ! in my house a great deal of business is done in a few hours. Some of your sober looking men come at the most unlikely times. Married men, for instance, who wish to keep all fair with their wives, and citizens, who steal hear in 'change hours. Oh ! I could tell you many amusing stratagems they are obliged to use.”

“ It would be but wasting your precious hours. Will you promise me the interview I request, and I will give you fifty guineas with pleasure.”

“ Well, then, my Lord, as your heart seems set on the business, in hopes of having you for a constant visitor, the first hour that she is quite disengaged, you shall have your ten minutes, or as long as you please with her.” Finding nothing more could be done Lord Malvern took his leave.

Two days after, as he was walking along St. James's Street, he thought he saw one of the chairmen he so much wished to meet. “ I want to speak with you,

my honest friend. Follow me to the next coffee-house." They entered, and calling for a private room, he soon found he was right. It was Dennis Macready. He reminded him of the circumstance of having before seen him, and pointed out the time.

"O Lord! I remember your Honor well."

"And when I paid you so well for waiting, why did you go before my return?"

"Why, your Honor, the pore pretty cratur begged so of all love that we would carry her away, and cried so bitterly, and prayed all the same as if she was at Mass, that we could not help it, indeed, your Honor: besides, axing your pardon, your Honor, she said, you was a vile cratur, and wanted to ruin her, and that she would not see you for the whole world."

"And where?" cried he, eagerly, "did you carry her to?"

"Why, your Honor," scratching his head, "if you will give me lave, I'll be after telling your Honor, that as the swate lady, bless her swate face! paid us very handsomely for consailing her. I wou'dn't like to betray her for nothing, because as why, that shall make me look like a spalpeen, and be contrary to my conscience."

"Oh! I understand you; you will do nothing without a bribe, and the highest bidder buys you. I gave you a guinea to stay; the lady, perhaps, gave you two to carry her away, and for three," putting them into his hand, "you will tell me where you carried her. I shall, by this time, be able to fathom an Irish chairman's conscience."

"Well, upon my conscience, now, you shall go very deep before you shall do that."

“ You took the lady then to a place of safety.”

“ Aye, you may say that ; indeed, and we did, for we carried her to the horse there, in Piccadilly ; and then the swate cratur gave us something to drink her health, and to wish her a good journey ; so Pat and I went to the tap hard by, and there many a good pot did we drink to the dear little soul.”

“ But what journey ?”

“ Oh ! to Bath. She took a place in the stage, and where she is now, the devil bodder me if I will tell you, because I know not myself.”

Lord Malvern made the fellow swear to the truth of his assertion, and being disposed to credit him, all the information he had gotten from Mrs. Spencer now fell to the ground. He concluded it to be most probable that Augusta had returned to the village where she was known ; and though he could not exactly define what his intentions, or even wishes, were, he resolved to set off that very day for Bath, and if he could not meet with her there, to pursue his journey into Devonshire ; his curiosity being more inflamed by the mystery which seemed to envelope every transaction relative to Augusta. He had some time before learned, by the assistance of the post boys on that road, where she had lodged when she first left Malvern. He hoped, by the farmer, to find out where she was, or at least whether she had given them any account of her proceedings. Something about his heart still flattered him she was not guilty, or even if she had been surprised into vice, that her principles were not vitiated. As to the idea of an honourable union with her, it was over. He blushed for having ever entertained it ; but, could she clear herself from

a connexion with his father, which he hoped most earnestly she would be able to do, he then found love enough in his heart to devote his life to her, as his imagination could not paint a more lovely woman; and although his first wish had been actuated by the most honourable views, yet now he was willing to avail himself of the only means left him of enjoying her society.

Home he went immediately to make some preparations for this expedition, the result of which, he flattered himself, would be the most fortunate to his happiness, that being centered in the possession of Augusta: but here a very different scene presented itself to his view, and for a time engrossed all his thoughts, and fully exercised the feelings of his heart.

CHAP. XX.

RETRIBUTION.

WILSON met him at the door: "Oh, my Lord!" said he, with a wild and terrified air, "I was going to seek you. Here has a most dreadful affair happened!"

"For God's sake! do not keep me in suspense: is my mother ill? Has any accident befallen her?"

"No, my Lady is well; but ——."

"Tell me directly."

"My Lord Glamore is wounded."

Lord Malvern staid to hear no more, but rushed through the hall: "Where, where is my father?" he

cried, eagerly, to several servants, who were hurrying up and down stairs. He followed some of them into Lady Glamore's dressing-room, and found her fainting on a sofa. He knelt down by her, imploring her to speak to him.

She opened her eyes, and then casting her arms round his neck, "Oh, my beloved son!" she uttered—"Your father! your unhappy, dying father! go to him: I cannot bear the sight. Oh, my God, thus to be cut off!"

He left his mother to the care of her woman, and with trembling limbs, and a heart sinking with grief, he approached the bedchamber of Lord Glamore. He saw that wretched man writhing with torture, from the efforts of a surgeon, to extract a ball that had penetrated his lungs. What a sight was this for the tender heart of Lord Malvern! It turned him so sick, that he staggered to a chair, and was near fainting: however, he recalled his scattered powers, and roused himself, hoping he might be of some service to the unhappy object before him.

"For heaven's sake!" cried he to the surgeon, "do let us have more assistance. How has this fatal accident happened?"

"I know nothing of it," replied the surgeon: "I was called in but just now. There are others of my profession coming, but, I believe, I can do all that can be done."

"Oh! do not say so," answered Lord Malvern. "Heaven forbid that the wound is mortal! Oh! my father, my dearest father!" he continued, as he knelt by the bedside, and wetting his father's hand with his tears. "this is more than I can bear!"

Lord Glamore faintly spoke. His words could hardly be articulated ; but what he uttered, imported, “ that every thing was fairly done ; that he had been a great sinner, and his crimes were overtaken by a violent death, the consequence of one of the most atrocious.” Other assistance arrived, but their endeavours were fruitless. Violent spasms and convulsions came on. Lord Malvern divided himself between the chambers of his parents. One, now almost insensible (as he had, indeed, in too many instances been undeserving) of his dutiful attention ; the other, too much alive to the horror of her situation, to admit of its being softened by participation.

Lady Glamore had for many years tenderly loved the husband of her choice, who possessed all the *agremens* to engage affection, had not his heart been tainted with so many vices : but the near approach of so dreadful a separation from the only object of her earliest attachment, cancelled every disquietude he had formerly given her, and she felt the keenest anguish at the idea of losing him for ever. Had the remembrance of Augusta occurred to Lord Malvern at this time, he might have possibly attempted to draw from his dying parent the truth of his situation with regard to her, and made all the atonement he could for having ruined her reputation, by declaring publicly her innocence ; but nothing presented itself to his view but the agonizing tortures the wound occasioned, and the hazardous situation of his afflicted mother. All his thoughts centered in the objects repeatedly before his eyes, which rent his filial heart with the deepest anguish that it had ever known.

The whole night did the wretched Lord Glamore

experience the utmost bodily tortures, and at nine the next morning breathed his last in a convulsive fit.

The event being so deplorable in its circumstances, had prevented their enquiries into the cause: but as now all assistance to his father was useless, Lord Malvern became anxious to know every particular that had occasioned so melancholy a catastrophe.

On Lord Glamore being at the levee one morning, he happened to be very near the Spanish ambassador, and paying him the respect of a bow, his Excellency turned short on his heel. The circumstance that had occasioned it did not immediately occur to his Lordship; but he mentioned the slight he had received at the levee, and expressed, with great chagrin, that he could not conceive from whence it had arisen, and that had he not been in the presence, he should have desired to have it explained.

“I wonder,” said a gentleman, who was present, “that your Lordship should be at a loss to guess the cause. I had the honour of giving you my opinion of the matter, when you had so imprudently disposed of your tickets for the Spanish Gala.”

“I remember a reproof,” answered Lord Glamore, “given with so much impertinence, that, had it not excited my contempt alone, you should have heard farther of.”

“It should rather have excited compunction, my Lord; and I hope it had, as you have not since been seen in such company. There could not have been a more gross affront put on his Excellency; and, for the honour of virtue, I am heartily glad he resented it.”

“And what the devil have you, Sir, or any man,

to do with what happened to be my choice in disposal of my tickets?" replied Lord Glamore, in an elevated voice. The rest of the company, fearing the consequences, unanimously called for another subject.

"With all my heart," replied Sir Charles B——, the gentleman, who had at Ranelagh represented to Lord Glamore the impropriety of introducing such an abandoned character in a set, that, although numerous, were meant to be select.

"And with all mine too," repeated Lord Glamore: "I do not wish the conviviality of the evening to be broken in upon by any disputes foreign to the company. Sir Charles and I can talk this business over at our leisure." Thus the little heat, which seemed fermenting, was allayed, and the party spent their time as usual in gaming and pushing the glass occasionally.

It so happened that Lord Glamore left the room just as Sir Charles B—— did, who very cordially wished his Lordship a good night, while he was talking with a gentleman whom he met in the passage.

Sir Charles seeing Lord Glamore's carriage at the door, and his own next, which he wanted to have drawn up: "I believe," said he, to his Lordship's footman, "your Lord is not just yet coming; do me the favour to pull off, that my chariot may come to the door."

In the moment that Lord Glamore's coach was moving, his Lordship stepped up—"D—n you, where are you going?" cried he, to his coachman: "put back this moment."

"It will not detain your Lordship two moments," said Sir Charles, "to let my chariot come up."

"From any one but yourself," returned Lord Glamore, "it would be indifferent; but a repetition of insolence I am not at all times disposed to bear."

Sir Charles B—— then turned round to his Lordship, and coolly said, "I am sorry a civil request should have been so ungraciously recorded; but, like the rest of your Lordship's conduct, it reflects more on you than me." Saying which, he stepped out of the house to his chariot which had been forced back by the imperious command of Lord Glamore. He had been sufficiently irritated by the loss of Augusta, whom his most sedulous inquiry could not trace, and whose elopement had caused great confusion in the house of the infamous Spencer. The letters she wrote upon that occasion will be produced in due time, which will satisfactorily account for the whole of the vile plot by which the unsuspecting, and inexperienced, Augusta was trepanned into the power of that vilest of women. The mind of Lord Glamore, inwardly sore from the frustration of a plan now so near completion, rendered him irascible, and more easy to be offended. His heart boiled over with rage against Sir Charles B—— for taking up the affront, which he conceived put on himself by the ambassador, not allowing that he alone had been the aggressor. The next morning he wrote a note to Sir Charles, demanding, in high language, an apology for his behaviour on the various points in which he felt himself aggrieved. To this Sir Charles returned a sensible, manly answer, referring his lordship to his cooler reason, to decide whether he had not acted with the most marked impropriety in the beginning of the business, and whether it could degrade his Lordship

in the eyes of the respectable world, to have made some apology to his Excellency."

However well meant this sober, yet spirited, letter might have been, it only served to heighten the resentment of Lord Glamore, and he replied, by denouncing severe vengeance, unless Sir Charles would, before the party where the affair had been mentioned, make the *amende honourable*. To this the Baronet could not comply, and then a formal agreement of deciding the matter in the most fashionable way was proposed, and accepted.

Sir Charles B——, being a married man, with a family, would have avoided the *rencontre* could he have done so with honour. However, uncertain what the event might be, he requested time to settle his worldly concerns. As to Lord Glamore, his accounts, both for this and the other world, were in the utmost confusion, and therefore he looked neither into the one, or gave himself a moment's reflection on the other. Three days after the combatants met in Hyde Park, in a retired spot, with their seconds, the reverend Mr. Bellamy being his Lordship's; and as Lord Glamore had sent the challenge, he of course was to give the first fire. Both discharged a pistol without effect. They then stopped. Sir Charles asked if his Lordship was satisfied? Not without the Baronet would make an apology. This his second would not comply with, and the man of God proposed that the principals should stand their ground. They fired again, and the ball of Sir Charles B——'s pistol lodged itself in the lungs of Lord Glamore, while his wounded the opponent slightly in the shoulder. From the field of action the wounded peer was conveyed to

his own house. Sir Charles surrendered himself; but as his conduct had been manly and honourable throughout, he was admitted to bail for his appearance; and the testimony of Lord Glamore clearly evidencing that he alone was in fault from the beginning, Sir Charles found little difficulty of clearing himself in the opinion of his judges."

Thus fell "the gallant, gay Lothario," a victim to those crimes he had so long gloried in. Too often, indeed, had he triumphed in the field, and never before had received a wound; but his career was run, and now, if he had any sense of the injuries he had meditated against Augusta, with those actual ones he had committed against many others, he must have allowed his punishment but a just retribution for the mischiefs he had occasioned in many families, and the consequent misery he had brought upon them. His sufferings were exquisite. Christianity prompts us to hope they were accepted, as some atonement for his guilt, which was manifold. Let his death be a warning to those who have too successfully followed his erring footsteps, lest they should meet a reward in similar sufferings.

The perplexed situation in which the late Lord Glamore had left all his affairs, took up a great deal of his son's time to regulate; and the effect which so sudden and fatal an end of her husband, had on her Ladyship, engrossed almost all of his thoughts; but sometimes the remembrance of Augusta would obtrude on his mind, and the endeavours to discover her retreat was only as a matter laid aside, not given up. All the day, indeed, business of a disagreeable nature employed his reflections; but each night presented

her in some interesting situation, that served to cherish the idea of her in his heart. He had, as soon as he could compose his mind, written to her, and gave the letter to his groom, directing him to go to Bath, and, if possible, deliver it to her; in which he acknowledged his invariable passion for her; at the same time declaring, if she could clear herself from the stain, which her residence with Mrs. Spencer had fixed upon her character, he would make her the sole arbitress of his fate, and unite himself to her by the most honourable ties. It is needless to repeat a letter fraught with affection, and the most generous sentiments; it was principally to induce her to answer it with candour and truth.

Lady Glamore slowly recovered from the shock she had received; and her son grew all impatience to hear from his servant. Under the pretence of the necessity of visiting the Malvern estate, the young Lord Glamore took leave of his mother, and arriving at Bath the same day, most eagerly questioned his groom concerning his success, but found he had gained no information of such a person as Miss Monckley being in that city. He staid only one day, and still leaving his servant behind him, proceeded to the village where farmer Williams lived; there he found his old acquaintance Martha, who, as soon as she saw him, burst into a flood of tears. The sight of her emotion affected him so much, that he was unable to ask her the cause of her affliction, and like Dennis Macready, could have almost found in his heart to have cried for company. But as soon as her sobs would let her, Martha began to open her case. "Oh laws! Sir, when last I saw you I was but little thinking

how misfortunate I should ha been ; but one never knows what is to happen to a body. There I told you as how I was going to be married ; but you will hear there was no such luck for poor I. Well, I went to the place where that vile man tel'd me he lived. As you are alive, the folk all jeered at me as if I was no better nor worse nor a nidget, and said there was no such parson as farmer Smith, and sed, if it had bin the first of Aprul, it woud have ben a good joke. Alack, it was no joke to me." "I am very sorry to hear of your disaster, Martha, but pray indulge me, before you proceed, in telling me what is become of your lady ? Have you seen her ?"

"Laws, Sir, why I a'n't come to that yet—you might as well ask me who was the strongest man, before you axed who was the first man ? let us say all in turn—you will find she, poor thing, has been bamboozled as well as I, and all, I dare say, by the same means. Well, to make short of my story, I must begin it from the beginning. This farmer Smith, as he called himself, came a suiting to me ; I was agreeable, because it would be a main good match, seeing I am not young, nor never was over handsome ; so I thought I should carry my pigs to a fair market, and now it minds me, tho' I didn't make great count of it then, that he was very quisitif about my lady, and ax'd a power of questions. I saw no harm in telling him all I knowed about my master's finding her, and all them sort of things ; and he was very arnest with me to shew him all the things Miss had in her possession, and what she had on when she was a baby ; and so I said, as how I didn't think young madam would like to have 'em seen, and so he kissed me,

(saving your honour's presence,) and told me how I might get my mistress's keys, and there would be no harm, as she would never know nothing about it, and so one day she gave me her keys, and I made as if I forgot to give them to her, and I shewed the cradle, and all the little things to him, to please his curiosity ; and he looked very partickler indeed at 'em ; then he said, what a pity as she can't find out her friends, and he was afraid she wou'dn't like to part with such a wallable servant as me, to be left all alone, and it mought hinder our settling together, as he wanted a wife very much to see after his consarns, so he perswaded me to put her in mind of writing it in the papers, upon which I did as he bid me, and so my young lady did as I wished her ; but I am sure I thought it all for her good : and she wrote two letters, all the same words though in both of them, and she gave them to me to put in the post, so John and I took a walk together. Ah ! poor me, I little thought I shud see him never no more. I wanted to put the letters into the box, becace my mistress had desired I would be very partickler indeed : but he laughed at me for a goose, to think as he wou'd'nt take care enough ; and so I never seed if he did put 'em in, and mayhap he didn't, for, as I says, he tuck leave of me that blessed afternoon, and never have I clap'd eyes on him sen. He never had no farm, nor nothing like it. Oh ! what a wicked wretch he must be, for to go far to serve a poor simple girl as I am such a trick ?" And then poor Martha began blabbering again.

" I fear," cried Lord Glamore, " this was but the prelude to a deeper plot."

" So says Mrs. Williams, and so I thinks too, for

what could he get by deceiving me for nothing? And it happened very odd too, that the old Lady should take Miss away, just that very day that he tel'd me to meet him at his farm, as if I should be purvented going to townd with her, for I knows that I'm not much of a sarvant for a Lady, that my dear Miss Augusta woudn't have parted with me but for my 'vantage. She had always a kindness and respect for me; and when she parted she sed so many kind things to me, and gave me a score of pounds on a bit of paper; and I doubts, poor Lady, she wants it herself now bad enough. I had not broke it, and tho' she never ax'd me for it, I sent it to her."

"What do you say? Do you know where she is?"

"I'll tell your honour all about it, for now I'm coming to that part of my story." However eager Lord Glamore was, yet he restrained himself, for if Martha had not her own way he could get nothing from her. "Well, when I found how I had been fooled by this rogue of a man, I had nothing to do but get back as well as I could to here, and, indeed, Mrs. Williams was main kind to me, and sed, as Miss Monckley had paid her so handsomely, I shud be welcome to live in the house till I could get a place suitable: so here I staid, waxing and grieving enough, God knows. But matters might ha bin worse; but that's neither here nor there to my story, and so about a fortnight agon, I went to see our old David, as lives in Malvern parish: I counted only to stay a day or two with him, and our cook, his wife; but they was very kind, indeed, and pressed me mainly to tarry with them a bit longer; and so, in the mean time,

there came a letter, directed for me, and so as Mrs. Williams thought every day I should come home, as I called it, seeing I was not settled no wheres, she didn't think it needed sending to me ; and, laws ! what should it be but a letter from Miss Augusta. I thought I shud have broke my heart, it was so mournful."

" For heaven's sake, Martha ! let me see it."

" Aye, that your honour shall," taking out her housewife, and slowly unrolling it, " Here it is ; I am sure I cried pales-full of tears to think how misfortunate my poor young Lady was, as well as myself." Lord Glamore, all agitation, caught the letter from her ; it was dated Bath, and near a fortnight back.

" How would my poor faithful Martha grieve, did she but know all the misery I have endured since I left her ! The story is too long and too melancholy to be repeated. I was deluded by the basest means to my ruin and destruction, and am now in poverty and sickness, with not a friend on earth to apply to, and destitute of common necessaries. I have directed this for you, by your maiden name, at Mrs. Williams's. I forget what that was your husband was called by. I beg you will send me the second sized leather trunk, and direct it to be left at the — Inn, Bath, for Miss Meyrick. I have been forced to change my name, the better to conceal myself. Oh ! that it would please God to conceal me in my grave ! I pray hourly for my death to end the sufferings of the lost and undone !

" A. M."

To Mrs. Martha Bowers.

How did every line pierce the heart of Lord Glamore, while he perused the letter expressive of so much anguish in the bosom of a woman still so dear to him.

“And have you sent the trunk?”

“Oh! yes, that I did, by the first waggon that went from Exeter, and I sent a bit of a letter too, for I can write a little, and put the twenty pounds, all as it was, in the letter; and I am sure poor Miss Augusta did not enjoy giving it me more nor I did, that I had it to send her in time of need, though it pitied my heart that she shud be in such distress.”

“You have a good heart,” said his Lordship; “nor shall you go without your reward. I cannot now spare much money, but be assured it shall be made up to you.” Then again looking at the letter, to be certain where he should find Augusta, he wished Martha a good day, and set his horses heads towards Bath.

He now easily accounted for his servants not being able to discover Augusta, as she had changed her name. How fondly he hoped he should find her unchanged in principles from the lovely creature that at first engaged his tenderest affections; and yet the words, “Deluded to my ruin and destruction,” almost froze his heart with fear, that she had not escaped from that scene of iniquity untainted. He rested a great deal of his future happiness on the letter he had written, which he soon hoped would be in her hands, and that her candour would induce her to explain her situation without reserve or disguise to a man, whom she must see still adored her. Full of the most enlivening ideas that had for a great while

occupied his mind, he hastened forward to Bath, as to a place that contained the only object but one in life he was interested for, and flattered himself every mile he passed, that he was so much nearer all that constituted his earthly happiness.

CHAP. XXI.

PATRONAGE.

WE now return to our heroine, whom we have too long left in a very unpleasant situation. The next morning, having never closed her eyes the whole night after her arrival at Bath, she rose with her head aching violently, and her ideas all confused. Attempting to dress herself, she grew giddy, and falling senseless on the floor, was discovered by one of the maid-servants, who greatly alarmed, called to her mistress to assist the poor strange lady, who was in a fit. They got her into bed, and as Bath abounds with physical men, they thought it a kind of heresy to offer her the least remedy themselves, but called in a physician directly. He sent both for an apothecary and surgeon, himself writing his prescription for Phlebotomy, and all the rest of the necessary, and, perhaps, unnecessary, *materia medica* in the school of Pharmacy. Her fever increased with violence, and a strong delirium came on in the evening. For ten days her disorder seemed to baffle all their endeavours

to procure a favourable crisis ; but at last it began to intermit, but with so little of favourable symptoms, that she was brought almost to the point of death. Happily for our wretched heroine she had fallen into the hands of a worthy woman, who, from a principle of real goodness, did every thing for her that had the sanction of the doctors, and likewise from herself, supplied her with linen for change and refreshment. She bestowed as much of her time as she could spare from her daily occupation in attending on the sick lady, and this truly from tenderness of heart, as she did not even think of being rewarded for it in this world.

The extreme lowness of spirits, and deep dejection, which seized Augusta, even when the violence of the fever abated, deprived her of all wish or inclination to remove from her chamber. She thought, and most earnestly hoped, she should soon be released from the troubles that had overwhelmed her, and sink into that grave she looked on as the only asylum and place of rest.

When she recollected all her various sufferings, in consequence of the misfortunes that had overtaken her in infancy, they seemed to form only one dreadful series of calamity. Her mind was too much depressed to view, as her excellent friend Mr. Monckley advised her, with calmness, both sides of the picture. All was gloom and wretchedness, and even, when she ceased to weep and lament with soul-rending complaints, her sorrow proved

“ A pensive anguish, pining at the heart.”

At last, rousing herself from this dangerous lethargy

so enervating to the body, and destructive to that reason which never appears to greater advantage than when struggling with difficulty, she found it necessary to make some settlement with her medical visitors, as well as her friendly hostess: she therefore called in their several accounts, and, although they were very reasonable, she found, without making any allowance for the use of Mrs. Baker's linen, that her only stock, till she received her legacy, was now reduced to twenty-five shillings. The shock of seeing herself thus in a state of poverty, with a constitution broken by illness, and a mind weakened by repeated misfortunes, made her almost give herself up to the blackest despair. Her firm foundation in religion could alone support her from falling a victim to it. She wrote the letter, as has been seen to Martha, being greatly distressed for apparel, and unable to purchase any. We have seen too, how that letter was prevented being so early taken notice of as it required, and as her necessities stood in need of. To do something to assist herself became necessary to her existence, which her returning health gave her reason to think would be prolonged much against her inclination. On a retrospect of her life and misfortunes, she derived happiness in reflecting that she had no flagrant errors to charge her heart with. She had been unfortunate, but not guilty. In weighing the evils of her life, she found them irremediable. She could not recall the dead to share her griefs, and she had for ever lost the esteem of the only person in the world she most wished to have attained; and in aid of her own excellent understanding, she recollected the advice of Lord Bolingbroke, and as she could not divert her mind

from thinking of the objects she had for ever lost, she was determined to adopt his counsel, and combat her griefs. She repeated this sentence of his :

“Dissipation of mind, and a length of time, are the remedies to which the greater part of mankind trust in their afflictions ; but the first of these works a temporary, the second, a slow effect, and both are unworthy a wise man.

“Are we to fly from ourselves, that we may fly from our misfortunes, and fondly imagine that the disease is cured because we get some minutes respite from pain ? Or shall we expect from time, the physician of brutes, a lingering and uncertain deliverance ? Shall we wait to be happy till we forget that we are miserable ? And owe to the weakness of our faculties a tranquillity, which ought to be the effect of our strength ? Far otherwise, let us set all our past and present afflictions at once before our eyes. Let us resolve to overcome them, instead of flying from them, or wearing out the sense of them by a long and ignominious patience. Instead of palliating remedies, let us use the incision knife, and the caustic ; search the wound to the bottom, and work an immediate and radical cure.”

We must allow the effort had some merit, when we consider this young philosopher was a delicate female, of less than nineteen years of age. She was determined not to deceive herself any longer, but become in practice what this excellent theory taught her. However, she thought she would again write to Mr. Bendley, and she should have this consolation of being assured her letter would go to the post. It was a hard task, and cost her many tears. She felt the

probing knife press deep into her heart. It will be thought in such exigencies, that to borrow some money of him would have been part of her petition; but if it occurred to her, she certainly never hinted it, being of too independent a spirit to owe a pecuniary obligation to any one, while she had hands to work, and abilities to plan any resource. Till March she could not receive her legacy, and then it would be six months longer before the first dividend would become due, so that for fourteen months she had only one pound five for subsistence money. She wished to be introduced into some family (which, indeed, was the only application she made to her respectable friend) as a companion to a lady in years, or to superintend children in the quality of a governess: but, alas! day after day passed, and she heard neither from Mr. Bendley or Martha. The absolute necessity of deciding directly, prompted her to mention her design of going out in the world to Mrs. Baker, and by her advice to her apothecary, who was likely, from his large acquaintance, to have the power of assisting her.

The account she gave of herself, which was true in fact, though she thought it expedient to assume another name, interested this worthy man much in her favour; and she scrupled not to tell him, that, by various disappointments, her finances were reduced to a very low ebb, and that her resources were at a great distance of time. He very humanely and generously begged her to accept the money she had paid him, till she could part from it with less inconvenience to herself. Most gratefully did she thank him for the benevolence of his offer, but assured him,

to be in debt was an evil she would ever defend herself from, even if she was reduced to labour for her bread; but she hoped her education would prevent her submitting to such humiliating distress, and then explained her request of being recommended to some lady of character.

He told her he had seen a woman of fashion that morning, who had asked him if he knew of any genteel young woman, that had been well educated, and could do the honours of her house with propriety, she being a good deal in years, and having a numerous acquaintance, found herself fatigued by arranging the necessary *etiquette* due to her visitors.

Augusta would have been better satisfied to have lived with some one on a more retired plan than Lady Mackannon; but her poverty more than her will induced her to offer herself to this Lady's protection; and, after asking Mrs. Baker if she knew any thing of Lady Mackannon, and receiving information that she was a Lady of fortune, and allied to many respectable families, and was visited by all the fashionable people of Bath, she determined to make trial of this way of life. Her health not permitting her to walk, she took a chair to the street where this Lady lived, accompanied by Mr. W——, her apothecary, who had kindly promised to introduce her, and likewise answer for her to Lady Mackannon.

Her heart sunk when she approached her Ladyship, on finding the most unpromising figure she had ever seen. Her age was upwards of seventy, tho' the colours of her gown and ornaments would have suited sixteen. She was palsied, crooked, blear-eyed and lame. Her neck had a contraction that always caused

her to lea^r side-ways, if the person who she addressed happened to be next her on that side from which her head averted. Her voice was coarse and harsh, and her manners far from conciliating strangers. She appeared struck with the innocent and meek graces of our heroine, and abated her usual abrupt method of speaking to her inferiors.

“ So, W——, this is the young Lady you spoke of? Well, I like her appearance much. Pray what salary do you require ?”

“ Having never been in such a capacity, Madam, I am equally at a loss, and unwilling to name any. I believe Mr. W—— has been so good as to mention, that in something more than a year I shall receive the fortune left me by my beloved father, which is two thousand pounds ; but till that time I have nothing to subsist on. I have some clothes, which I expect every day to arrive, and had it not been for a severe illness, I would not think of stipulating for any sum till Lady Mackannon saw my deserts.” Augusta would not have said thus much, but by the express request of Mr. W——.

“ Well, you speak very candidly, Miss Meyrick, as I find you are named ; to be sure you will require clothes to make a proper appearance. I have a maid to wait upon me, so that I shall never ask your attendance on my person, unless, indeed, I should be at any time ill, or so engaged that I should stand in need of assistance, and that, from your engaging countenance, we shall not quarrel about. What do you think of twenty-five or thirty pounds a year ?”

“ I shall be most amply satisfied, Madam.”

“ Well, then, I will pay you the smaller sum, and after the first quarter is expired, and you suit me, I

believe I shall not grudge making it the other. I shall be glad if you could stay now, as I am not very well, and being forced to put off going to a party this evening, where all my friends are engaged; I must otherwise pass it alone, and nothing is so irksome to me as to be left entirely without company. Perhaps, W——, you can come, and help us to a little conversation of the people of Bath.”

Mr. W——gladly complied with her Ladyship's invitation, for he had seen enough of our heroine to be exceedingly interested in her welfare, and wished to improve his acquaintance with so lovely and amiable a young creature. The arrangement was soon made; nor did it give a little pleasure to Augusta to find Mr. W——was to be of their party. He was a sensible, well-behaved old man, and she hoped she should find relief from there being a third person, who seemed to esteem her, and who would certainly impress the Lady with a good opinion of her new companion, by the very respectful notice he took of her.

Very fortunately the next day the trunk arrived safely to Mrs. Baker's, and was sent to Augusta; but the generosity of Martha lay hidden with her letter, for out of great caution both the bank note and the letter were folded up in a piece of parchment, and that as carefully nailed down on the box, with the direction written on it. There it lay, indeed, very secure, but useless to our heroine, who, ignorant of the good Martha's intention, never thought of looking there for a letter, though she regretted much that she had not given her a line to acquaint her with her welfare. She found in two days acquaintance with Lady Mac. as she was usually called, that their minds, in

most things, were perfectly dissimilar ; for though a woman of strong natural sense, and by no means of a neglected education, she had more pleasure in listening to an idle story of detraction, or the insipid anecdotes of fashionable folly, than in discussing any serious or moral point. Company, dissipation, produced from cards, or the most frivolous amusements, were the seeming end and employment of her life. Though her character was void of every amiable trait, yet, as she gave brilliant assemblies, they were frequented by all the *monde* at Bath, between which place, and varying the scene, though not the company, at Tunbridge Wells and Brighton she passed her whole time : but, although, when compared to the infamous Spencer, she was an angel of light, her character could be only thought respectable by making her the contrast of her Ladyship. She was very kind and convenient to the young and unthinking part of the world. If a Lady could not receive a young man at her father's house, at Lady Mackannon's route there was no difficulty of meeting him : Nay, married Ladies had carried on intrigues under her roof unreprieved, and undetected. It will be objected, why did Mr. W—— recommend such a protector to a young and innocent girl who applied to him for advice ? Those who know Bath, must know the inhabitants deem it political to keep well with the wealthy and fashionable part of the community, and it was no business of Mr. W—— to set Lady Mackannon in a point of view, it might be supposed nobody else saw her in, or her parties would not have been so much crowded, and the situation of our heroine demanded instant relief. Besides, a man that had passed his

whole life among people who think with the multitude, submitted his opinions to be guided by those of others ; and while Lady Mac. recommended him to all her acquaintance, and only did herself as hundred others did, he did not look on her character with that strict eye of criticism as our cool readers may.

Fortunately for our heroine the old Lady was indisposed for some days, and had not the power of receiving company. Augusta used to read to her ; but the prevailing taste of Lady Mac. shewed itself too in the books she selected for her amusement, some of which could hardly be read without the lovely girl's face being crimsoned with blushes ; but she found herself in that unpleasant predicament, so common to dependants, that she must sacrifice a great deal of her feeling for the advantage of having bread to eat. She, however, still hoped to hear from Mr. Bendley, and be able to make her peace with him ; in consequence of which, as she only looked on her residence with Lady Mac. as temporary, she accommodated herself to her present circumstances with as much ease as she could.

The butler one morning brought Augusta three packs of plain message cards, with his Lady's list of acquaintance, requesting her to write the invitations to a party for such a day, naming the day of the month. (We would not have our readers suppose Lady Mac. so destitute of polite knowledge as to give her friends so short a notice as three days only ; but she constantly had private parties once a week, therefore these messages were only as hints that they might not forget.) Augusta sat about her task, which was pretty voluminous ; but when she had written a few, she recol-

lected the tenth of the month; the day named, was Sunday. She instantly went to her Ladyship, informing her of the mistake.

“Mistake! No, it is no mistake. Pray, make haste and finish, or they will not be delivered in time.”

“A card party for Sunday! I believe you did not understand me, Madam. The tenth is Sunday next.”

“Well, then, for fear they should forget, write for Sunday the tenth of July.”

Augusta left her all astonished at this, to her new way of spending the Sabbath: however, she was resolved she would not be in the drawing-room, let the consequence be what it might. The cards were written and dispatched according to their respective addresses. Lady Mac. went out both of the intervening nights, and on the Sunday morning Augusta, for the first time of being out, went to the Abbey church. Her Ladyship lay in bed the whole of it, to be able to receive her party at night. As our heroine came out of the church, she saw the groom of Lord Glamore; not that she knew him, but the livery being a very remarkable one, and that of old Mr. Malvern, struck her very forcibly. She got into a chair with great trepidation, and hoped she had escaped undiscovered by him. Her heart fluttered so exceedingly that she could hardly keep herself from fainting. The idea of that vile man (for she knew not of the death of her persecutor, it happening during the worst of her illness) having discovered her retreat, almost drove her to distraction, and, unfortunately for her, Lady Mac. was not a person in whose discretion she could at all confide. It seemed as if all her troubles were again commencing, her hope only resting in the servant

not knowing her person ; in which, however, she deceived herself. He had had so thorough a description of it, that he was at but little loss to know he had found the Lady his master was so anxious to have his letter delivered to, and accordingly followed the chair to Lady Mac.'s ; and finding one of the servants, an acquaintance of his, having been in the service of the old Lord Glamore some years, and occasionally attended his master to Brighton, where they had met, he requested him to give that letter from Lord Glamore to the young Lady, who had but a few minutes before entered the house. In his way to the anti-drawing room he encountered the *femme-de-chambre*, who asked him what letter he had in his hand ?”

“ Why,” said he, “ William, Lord Glamore's groom, gave it to me for our young Lady.”

“ Lord ! it can't be for her ; why, her name is Meyrick, and this is directed for Miss Monckley.”

“ Well, Will can't be mistaken seeing, as he followed her from the Abbey church.”

“ It is very extraordinary, indeed ! Well, this shall go to my Lady.”

“ I'll be d—d if it does, though ; for I will give it to that sweet pretty creature herself, that I will.”

“ Fool ! I did not mean the letter. Take that to her, if you will ; but, please the Lord, my Lady shall know she has two names, if I live. There is some mystery I'll be bound for it. What should a fine Lord write to her for I wonder ?” Thomas carried the letter. With a trembling voice Augusta asked who it came from ?

“ I do not know, Madam ; but a servant of Lord Glamore's gave it me, and said, he hoped you would

be so good to answer it; for his Lordship had employed him some time to get it delivered to you."

"Infamous wretch!" cried Augusta, with great emotion, tearing the letter to atoms. "Am I still to be tormented by thy vile machinations? Am I never to know peace in this world?"

She felt herself so much disordered by this incident, that, had she not already taken her resolution of not appearing that evening, the disturbance of this fresh instance of misfortune would have disabled her; she went to her room in tears of keen anguish for remembered griefs, and those which might ensue. Hardly could she appear in any decent composure at dinner. Lady Mac. was in high spirits for the evening's diversion, and recommended some ornaments to Augusta, that her *dishabille* might wear a more fashionable appearance; for from necessity she had been obliged to lay her black bombazeen aside, and had on a white muslin dress.

"I hope, my dear madam, you will excuse my attendance this night in the drawing-room: I am not well, and I must be allowed to say, the passing the evening of the Sabbath in card playing is so extremely repugnant to my principles, that, consistent with the religious duties of the day, I cannot appear."

"You cannot! that is a pretty farce indeed! Pray, are you to set up for a reformer of the age?"

"I am sorry it stands in need of so feeble an advocate: but I must, indeed I must be excused attending the card tables. I will see every thing properly arranged for the company; but to be witness of such a violation of Christian decency would be to take a sinful share in it, and what my conscience will not

allow, nor shall a weak compliance with the world in bad things ever induce me to do."

"Lord have mercy! Why, child, I shall expect you will preach next. Well, this is a flight, indeed! So you won't appear?"

"I hope your Ladyship will be so very good as to excuse me. Indeed, this evening, I shall be most particularly obliged by your indulgence."

Lady Mac. offered a thousand futile arguments to prove the innocence of card-playing, which Augusta found it would be labour-in-vain to controvert, and therefore only carried her point of passing the evening in her own room.

About seven the riotous set rushed in. Augusta had taken care that the candles and every thing was in order for the company, and retired to her own room to weep and reflect on her wayward fortune. After nine she thought she would go down to see that the proper refreshments were sent in, and she stopped sometime in the small room where they were served, that Lady Mac. might not have to blame her for any neglect. As the door leading to the drawing-room was open, from the servants going in with orgeat, ices, and lemonade, &c. she heard Lady Mac. say, "I thought, with all her piety, she would have left us to starve."

"Who are you speaking of?" said a gentleman.

"Why, a companion of mine. I thought to have shewn her to you. She is handsome enough; but, upon my life, she is a methodist. I should not wonder if she should come and give us a sermon on the heinousness of card-playing on the Sabbath day. I could not prevail on her to appear."

“ By the Lord I will go and bring her in, and I will preach to her from this text, ‘ Go, and do likewise.’ ”

Augusta ran to the door which led to the saloon, in hopes to escape to her room ; but the gentleman who spoke last caught hold of her just as she had gained the passage, and rudely seizing her petticoat, gave it a great rent. She would have gladly compounded to have got from him. He detained her with his violent arms.

“ A methodist ! an angel rather,” cried he. “ I never saw such a divinity in all my life. My dear creature, I beg your pardon for injuring your dress. Do me the favour of accepting this purse, with my apology for my rudeness, and to repair the damage it has done.”

“ You may repair the damage at much less expence, Sir,” said Augusta, haughtily, “ and infinitely more pleasing to me, by suffering me to retire.”

“ Oh ! my angel, we must not part so. Pray accept it as an earnest of my adoration, which you so much deserve.”

“ I am not, Sir,” she replied, with spirit and dignity, “ in a situation to receive presents from gentlemen, nor in the disposition at any time to put up with insult.” She broke from him, and hurried up to her own room. “ Am I never to receive other treatment from that sex than insolence ?” she cried. “ Oh ! that I could fly to some sequestered spot which man does not inhabit ! Surely it is a savage race, and I am born to be their prey.” Her heart just for a moment whispered one exception ; but she drove the idea from her with a sigh, and endeavoured to compose herself.

The company did not quit the rooms till after eleven, and Augusta, from the lateness of the hour, concluded Lady Mac. could not want her, therefore prepared for bed, more than ever disgusted with her situation, and trusting that, through the means of Mr. Bendley, she should be placed with some family, for whom she might indulge esteem and veneration.

When Augusta attended the toilette of Lady Mac. she found her in a very ill humour, perhaps increased by her having had a bad run of cards the preceding evening; an event that seldom happened, as her Ladyship was supposed to play what is called the whole game, as well as most folks, and was particularly quick at marking at cribbage. She scarcely answered the compliments of the morning, or turned her head to look at our heroine as she stood beside her. At last, after muttering and grumbling, and occasionally scolding her servant for twitching her poor scraggling thin grey hair, she leered round to Augusta, not having the decorum to wait for the absence of her servant, "Pray, Ma'am, how came you to treat my nephew, the honourable Mr. Henry Neville, with so much impertinence last night?"

"Your nephew, Madam, though I knew not his relation to your Ladyship, treated me with great indignity."

"Indignity! indignity! What, because he did you the honour of taking notice of your baby face? I say indignity too! What, did he kiss you, my pretty dear?"

"No, Madam," replied Augusta, quickly; "such an insolence I should have resented more forcibly."

"For God's sake, child!" cried she, "come more

to the front, that I may see what is in you to give yourself such monstrous airs. I think my nephew did you too much honour to request your company in the drawing-room."

"You had permitted me to be absent, Madam."

"Well, then, Madam, I chose afterwards that you should be present."

"Your nephew took not the proper method."

"My nephew! If you please, Miss Prate-a-pace, to give my nephew his distinguishing title, and do not use such unbecoming freedoms when you speak of men of quality."

"The honourable Mr. Henry Neville, then, Madam, gave me so rude a specimen of what treatment I should meet with in your drawing-room, that it was sufficient to deter me, even if I had resolved not to witness so gross a violation of decency, as card-playing on a Sunday."

"You are extremely ignorant, as well as impertinent, child, and a great fool into the bargain. The notice of such a man as Harry Neville might have been of infinite service to you. From his bringing you into fashion, you, very probably, would have carried your beauty to a good market. I have known several girls marry exceedingly well, from that very circumstance; besides, you might have been flattered with the attention of the handsomest man in Bath, I think."

"If he had been the handsomest man in the world, it would have been the same to me," answered Augusta, with pique and indifference.

"Oh, ho! I know how it is. But with all your sanctified airs of modesty, you can receive letters

from Lords I find, and go by different names. Pray, how do you reconcile that, Madam? How long have you been in correspondence with Lord Glamore? and what were the contents of the letter you had yesterday?"

"Though I do not conceive myself obliged to satisfy demands so rudely made, I can tell you, Madam, that I know nothing of the contents. I detest Lord Glamore, and destroyed his infamous letter without deigning to open it."

"Upon my life, I fancy I have got some tragedy Princess in my house. Speak, child, was you ever on the stage?"

"Your Ladyship may discharge me whenever you please, but can assume no right to treat me with this unbecoming cruelty." Without taking notice of the tears which, notwithstanding her wounded pride, Augusta could not restrain.

"Well, I shall insist on your appearance this evening, or you shall no longer remain under my roof, I assure you."

Augusta feared too that, if even she escaped seeing Lord Glamore, she might see some one who should recollect her face, and expose her to fresh difficulties; therefore was determined at once to put an end to her perplexities on that head, by candidly and modestly assuring her Ladyship, she could on no account go into company either that night or any other. Words cannot express the fury this information occasioned in Lady Mac. The most virulent abuse was poured forth with such vehemence, and at the same time with as much facility, as if she had been in the

habit of constantly using the vulgar tongue, or had been bred up at Billingsgate market.

Augusta made good her retreat, as soon as she possibly could, to her own room, almost overpowered by this frantic woman. When there, she began to think what next she should do. To stay here was impossible, even if Lady Mac. should wave her dignity, and request it. The agitation of her spirits prevented her feeling the acuteness of her present distress, or what of the future she might encounter. Her inability to raise money enough to carry her to Mrs. Williams's struck her to the heart, and with agony she clasped her hands together, when a friendly shower of tears relieved her mind, and gave her strength for reflection. She recollected what the savage Benjamin Monckley had once said, 'that she might be glad to meet with a good chap' for her musical instrument, and the answer she had made him.

"Alas!" cried she, "I am now in want of bread, indeed; and had I the piano-forte here, perhaps, should be tempted to sell it for my maintenance, for never will my soul know harmony again."

She then thought she would ask Mrs. Baker to lend her a trifle, and she would either leave her trunk or her watch for her security. Blessing the Almighty for suggesting that idea to her, she delayed not one moment writing a line to the enraged Lady Mac. informing her Ladyship, that, being ordered to quit her house, in language that could neither be forgotten, or any future civility do away, that she had availed herself of the natural rights of mankind to pursue her own inclinations, and therefore took a formal and

final leave of her. She put on her cloak, resolved that nothing should delay her project, and set off for Mrs. Baker's house, which was only in the next street. She hurried on, hardly raising her eyes off the pavement; but the corner of the street presented an object to her, which seemed in one moment to obliterate every sentiment from her heart but joy and thankfulness.

In the next chapter this joyful apparition shall be introduced to the reader's knowledge.

CHAP. XXII.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

THIS mortal, who had so happy an effect on our poor heroine, was no other than the good Mr. Bendley!

"Oh, my friend!" cried Augusta, "how fortunate this meeting! I thought you a little unkind in not answering my melancholy letter; but how am I doubly recompensed by this kind visit!—a favour I could not have expected, because you might have justly been offended with my former neglect; but when you have heard all your poor Augusta ——." She could not proceed, the recollection of her sufferings could only give vent to itself by streaming eyes.

"I cannot take a merit, my dear," said he, affectionately taking her hand, "that I do not deserve. I know nothing of a letter, having been some weeks from home. I heard of your removal to London, and hoped it had made you happy. You must believe me

sincere, when I say I should have rejoiced with you on discovering your family, had you acquainted me with it."

"Oh! my dear Sir, I have much to tell you, and, I trust, when you know all my sufferings, you will, in your pardon, bury my omission. I am going to the inn, just by, will you favour me with your company? Now I have found you I shall be happy, be perfectly satisfied. Now I shall be at rest with the only respectable character I have met with since I last saw you."

His curiosity was much raised. They arrived at Mrs. Baker's, and Augusta begged to have a room, that she might open her over-charged heart to her friend.

She related to him succinctly every occurrence that had happened to her since their parting, relative to her pretended mother, and the base Lord Glamore. However, as the young Lord, whose name she knew not, had nothing to do with her natural abhorrence of vice, she left him entirely out of her narrative, as being a subject foreign to it. Mr. Bendley could only lament and wonder at the lengths a vicious man will proceed, to gratify his passions. The circumstance then of their unexpected meeting was discussed. Mr. Bendly now took up the task of historian.

"My youngest daughter Maria," said he, "had long been the object of affection to Edward Wyndham, who I dare say you recollect was an intimate friend of our poor Henry's. Had I known it, I should, from prudential motives, have given it all the discouragement in my power; but it was kept for that reason, a profound secret from me. By the death of his uncle,

who was likewise his guardian, young Wyndham came into a great increase of fortune; and now being his own master, the first use he made of his free agency, was to avow to me his long attachment, and to request my permission to marry Maria immediately. As his worth was well known to me, and I soon found Maria was tenderly attached to him; you will believe such an establishment for her was very desirable to me. The young man was eager to have the business completed, which would put him in possession of the woman he had loved from youth, and in about three weeks they were married. With the most noble generosity my son-in-law presented me directly to a living near their house. They took Amelia with them, and thinking a few weeks at Bath would be of service to my dear wife, insisted on my taking her there, and pressed a bank note of an hundred pounds into my hand, to defray the expence. The trial, which my narrow circumstances before could not afford to be made, has had the happiest effect on that loved woman's health. I occasionally left her to do duty at my church, and returned but yesterday here. To-morrow I intended taking her home to our new habitation, which my excellent son has furnished completely for us. How much do I rejoice, that I have met with you; it seems particularly fortunate, for had it not happened at the moment it did, it could not have happened at all, as I was going home to settle my accounts, and should not have been out 'till I sat off early in the morning. Augusta most sincerely congratulated him on this cause, for joy and comfort in his latter years, and then, with blushing irresolution, asked, in a hesitating voice, if now he could not allow her the asylum of his roof?

“My dearest girl,” cried he, “you know not how I am pained now, and still more from the recollection, that could I have before made you that offer, you would have been saved much sorrow. I will, however, never desert you, but must trust to your gentleness and goodness of heart, to make allowances for those who are not so amiable. I must expose a weakness in my family, that has given me infinite concern, but to you I may disclose it, for I am certain you will pardon it.” He then related what has before been told, of the unhappy partiality his daughter Amelia had entertained for Henry Monckley; together with the cruel and unjust dislike which jealousy had caused towards Augusta. Great was the astonishment of the latter, and she could not help exclaiming, “Oh! how happy might we all have been, had this been known some months since. Mine would have been secured most everlastingly, for now I may tell you, my dear Mr. Bendley, that I could never teach my heart to feel for poor Henry, more than a sister’s love. He often reproached me for my coldness, and nothing would have given me so much joy, as having seen him married to another, and so sweet a young woman as Miss Bendley would have made him happy in a mutual affection, which I am more than ever convinced,” said she, with a gentle sigh, “I never could have felt for him; then might he have been still living, and my beloved benefactor would have, at this moment, been a protector to his Augusta. Oh, what a complicated scene of woe had been spared my youth, and which will embitter all my succeeding years, had Henry known he was beloved by Amelia Bendley!” “Alas, my sweet Augusta, he knew it but too well—

the imprudent girl, flattering herself that he was once attached to her, reproached him with such acrimony, the last time she saw him (which proved the day of his death) with his breach of constancy to her, that a violent quarrel ensued; she has been miserable enough since—but still, as she looked on you as her rival, she can never see you in any other light, than as one born to make her wretched. Thus situated, I cannot ask you to my house, yet is my heart wounded to refuse what it would have been my first wish to have offered, when you were left without a protector by the death of your excellent friend. But I can place you where you may be happy. The widow of the late Mr. Wyndham, is a most charming woman; I have known her many years, she has two daughters, one of eleven, and the other seven. She will be delighted with such a companion as you, to assist her in bringing up her children, having an invincible dislike to boarding schools. To her I will convey you—you shall return with me to my lodgings, and to-morrow morning go with us to Bristol, where she now is, it will make but little difference in our route, and I shall feel a transport, almost equal to a parent, in seeing my amiable young friend so respectably settled.” Augusta could not find language to thank Mr. Bendley, but falling on his neck, gave vent to her gratitude by eloquent tears. Together they proceeded, and she was received with the utmost benevolence by Mrs. Bendley. Her heart now felt more happiness than it had tasted for a great length of time. How fervent were her acknowledgments to that benign and heavenly protector of youthful innocence, for thus extricating her from such difficulties, and at last having

afforded her such an asylum. She sent a chairman to Lady Mackannon for her trunk, devoutly wishing she might never again encounter that violent wretch, who she found, from the character Mrs. Bendley had heard of her, was styled by the inhabitants of Bath, the Q—— of H——l. From this infernal sovereign, Augusta could not enough rejoice from being disengaged. When the trunk was brought to her, she tore off the direction, “Never, I hope,” she cried, “shall I again have occasion to change my name,” and had there been a fire, most probably would have thrown it altogether in the flames, but recollecting she might want the parchment to write upon what was now necessary, as the trunk was to go by the waggon, she opened it to turn the former address inside, what then was her astonishment, to see a scrawl of a letter, and looking in it, a twenty pound bank note. Such an instance of generosity in a poor servant, affected her very much. The letter infolding the note, was as follows:—

“Onurd Madm,

It does grief mee indede to hare of yure misfortin, Laws hart I lettell thout of yure bein ass unappy nor misulf—wat a world it is. That farmur Smith was ass big a roage ass any yow ave met with. I am but a pore scribe, so cant say much, only begs yow will ekcept on the munney yow was so kind to gin me—its nothing for a pore sarvant to work hard for livin, but yow be yoused to hav evry thing founde for yow. Pra then dere onourd Miss, tak this agen,

Yowr moste undutyfull sarvant,

to commande,

Martha Bowers.”

The most elaborate epistle would not have displayed the worth of the human heart, better than this miserable ill spelt letter of honest Martha, nor was Augusta unmindful of the blessing of Providence in permitting this bounty to remain concealed so long; for had she known it sooner, it would have prevented her projected application to Mrs. Baker, by which she so fortunately met with Mr. Bendley. These events served to strengthen her reliance on heaven, and trust with confidence in its care. The next day she was introduced to Mrs. Wyndham, and had the happiness to be most pleasingly received by her. The cheering prospect that opened upon our heroine, by meeting with Mr. Bendley, and the sweet refreshing sleep she had enjoyed at his lodgings, had given all the appearance of returning health to her person, and again the rosy tints of her cheeks seemed to bloom. Mrs. Wyndham was struck with her elegant and interesting figure, nor could thank Mr. Bendley enough for procuring her so eligible a companion. She did not oppress her, by asking what salary she should give her, nor hinted any thing which bore the least surmise that she did not receive her as a visitor, with whom she hoped to make a strict friendship. The girls seemed delighted to have some one, who would unite with their mother in giving them instructions. Mrs. Wyndham was turned of forty, of a most pleasing benevolent countenance, though apparently had never been very handsome, but it was a kind of face, that told her heart was amiable.

This situation was the most desirable in the world for Augusta; she looked forward to peace, ease, and elegance. Mrs. Wyndham had purposed leaving the

Hot-Wells the next day, and then proceeding for Kidwelly, in South Wales, where was her jointure-house. They took a most affectionate leave of the Bendley's, and Mrs. Wyndham, with her two daughters and Augusta, in a post coach and four, with two maid servants in a chaise, travelled, by easy stages, through a beautiful romantic country, to the seat of Wyndham Place.

A little incident occurred in the journey interesting to Augusta, and which served to strengthen the bond of amity that seemed likely to subsist between Mrs. Wyndham and herself. At some distance she beheld a venerable pile, partly the remains of an ancient castle. On her remarking it, Caroline said to her mother, "Oh! pray, mamma, do now indulge us in viewing the inside of Brandon Castle; you have often said we should, and now it is such warm travelling, it will be quite a relief to walk in those gothic aisles."

Augusta was pleased with the idea of contemplating a fabric of such ancient structure, and Mrs. Wyndham ordered the servants to drive to the Lodge. When they arrived, and were preparing to enter the vestibule, Mrs. Wyndham seemed very much overcome. "You talked of the heat," said she to Caroline, "indeed I think it quite oppressive. Miss Monckley, will you have the goodness to excuse my attending you over the rooms. I will walk in the hall, or sit in the porch, till you return."

An old housekeeper waited on Augusta and the young Ladies through a range of apartments. In one of them the eyes of Augusta were rivetted on a portrait. She tried to disengage them to view some

others, still they returned to that. She thought almost the object too dear to her memory was before her. It was the exact representation of the young nobleman whose idea had seldom quitted her bosom, though she had tried to lose the remembrance of him. Caroline wanted her to examine a curious antique cabinet; but still her regards were bent on the picture. It now took Caroline's eyes. "Mercy on me," she cried, "what a handsome man! Dear Miss Monckley, did you ever see such a beauty? And, notwithstanding that odd fashion of his coat, pray, ma'am," (to the housekeeper) "who is that gentleman?"

"Ah! poor unfortunate gentleman," answered she, "he would, if he had lived, been the Lord of this castle and estate. He was son to the late Earl. My poor old Lord had it thrown in a garret when he offended him by marrying against his inclinations. He was to have been the husband of your mamma, and had that happened he might have been alive at this day."

"Lord!" cried Louisa, the youngest, "was that handsome gentleman to have been my papa?"

"Do not, my love, mention our having seen this picture," cried Augusta; the reason of Mrs. Wyndham not coming in with them occurring to her. "Dear unhappy, charming woman!" she said softly to herself, "how interested I feel for thee! Fatal representation!" she added, dropping a tear, part of which must be placed, we fear, to her own particular fate, as well as Mrs. Wyndham's. When they returned, they found that Lady walking before the house, and sensibility, which had rendered Augusta quick-sighted, could trace the meandering tear on her face. They

talked of various things they had seen ; but the prudent little girls never dropped a hint of the picture, and Mrs. Wyndham, unconscious that Augusta had any interest in the portrait, recovered her usual cheerfulness.

Never before had Augusta met with an elegant, refined woman. It was now that she began to taste the pleasures of conversation with one of her own sex, and to feel the benefit arising from a growing friendship. Equally was Mrs. Wyndham charmed with our heroine ; their minds were gentle, and a general train of the same ideas occupied them, and gave that delightful sympathy of thought, so pleasing in our intercourse with each other.

Mrs. Wyndham had an ample jointure, and her daughters were, when of age, to have ten thousand pounds each. She was desirous of their having rather an elegant than expensive education, and therefore chose to have that education at home, than that they should receive it at a school near London, which had been much recommended to her : but, although they might have gained some very brilliant accomplishments or at least had masters who profess to teach such, she thought they might likewise acquire some principles in a large society of girls, left solely to governesses, which would in her mind counteract, or destroy those delicate and proper notions she had constantly endeavoured to instil into their minds from earliest infancy, and which, in her idea, were infinitely preferable to the refinements of the most polished education that girls could receive.

How fortunate then must she have thought herself to find, in so young and amiable a woman as Augusta,

a mind stored with every useful and ornamental knowledge, perfect mistress of the languages, reading both French and Italian with the purest and most just precision, well versed in music, drawing, and all fancy works, with a heart replete with every sentiment, to form the elegant woman of the world with the highest notions of religion and morality? The beauty of her form, the elegant turn of all her movements, the softness and musical tone of her voice, even in common speaking, rendered all she did, said, or looked, the most captivating and interesting Mrs. Wyndham had ever met with in any human creature; while the sweet Augusta felt the most happy of mortals to be where her services were acceptable, and so well repaid by the tenderest attention that she had once fondly hoped she should have received from a parent. In such a family her days passed with serenity and rational cheerfulness. The lapse of time was marked by improvement, and each hour reflected on with delight, because no one hour went by without its proper and allotted employment.

There were many respectable families in the neighbourhood of Kidwelly, with whom Mrs. Wyndham occasionally associated. Miss Monckley was distinguished by them all with the utmost polite attention; but it was not polite attention alone with which she was beheld by Sir Maurice Morgan, a nephew of Mrs. Wyndham. He had received his education at Mr. Bendley's, and was the cotemporary of Henry. He had often seen Augusta when she was yet a child, and expressed the highest satisfaction in having the opportunity of renewing his acquaintance with her. The intimate footing his relationship, but above all the

unexceptionable character he bore, gave him at Wyndham Place, brought the excellencies of Augusta more to his view. Her charming person had engaged his notice, and a farther knowledge of her amiable perfections, which no one could be long in her company without perceiving, created in his bosom a most tender passion. He was sensible, lively, good-humoured, with a manly, open countenance, graceful address, and though not critically handsome, yet his figure was that of a gentleman.

He used to remind Augusta of many circumstances that had happened; told her it was he who had lent Henry the little poney, on which he had paid his first visit to her, and that the only quarrel Henry and he had ever been engaged in, was, because he would not allow his friend Maurice to draw the little girl in her chaise.

“But,” cried he, “our regard was too sincere and ardent at that time to be destroyed, even by a beautiful female, though different pursuits and engagements prevented our intimacy continuing; but I shall always love him, and rejoice in hearing of his well doing.”

Augusta found, from the discourse of Sir Maurice, that he knew not of the unhappy fate of his first friend. Her face turned pale as ashes, and the tears rushed into her eyes. She attempted to explain to him the cause, which had alarmed him very much; but her voice was choaked with grief, and she ran hastily out of the room to conceal the emotions she could not restrain.

Sir Maurice Morgan was struck by her tears, and irresolute how to act; but Mrs. Wyndham entering

the room at one door, almost at the moment that Augusta had shut the other, he acquainted her how much he had been shocked by the distress he had ignorantly occasioned Miss Monckley. Mrs. Wyndham had heard from Mr. Bendley of the fatal accident that had caused the death of Henry, on the eve of his marriage with Augusta. How much was the heart of Sir Maurice filled with sorrow, on finding he had by chance, touched on so interesting a source of affliction to this amiable girl. He rested not till he had made all the apology in his power; nor did he wait long for the opportunity. Augusta, as soon as she could recover the tone of her voice, returned to the parlour, sweetly entreating his excuse for the weakness she had discovered. The Baronet dropped a tear to the memory of his early friend; and the conviction of his having a tender heart, gave him additional credit with our heroine. The unaffected complacency with which she listened to his discourse, endeared her every day more powerfully to Sir Maurice, who found no pleasure but in seeing her; no delight equal to that of the idea that he might obtain her heart and hand. Mrs. Wyndham saw with infinite satisfaction how much Augusta was the object of her nephew's serious regard, but forbore to give a hint of her discovering his growing attachment, allowing him to make his own way into the esteem of Augusta, and by degrees kindling that esteem into a more tender sentiment. Thus affairs passed on some time, and Augusta now flattered herself she was, after being tossed about on the stormy ocean, arrived in a safe and comfortable harbour for life.

She had written to Martha, gratefully acknowledg-

ing her generosity, and assuring her, the first dividend she should receive from her fortune, she would discharge her obligation with interest, and requested her to send all her heavy baggage by the first conveyance, looking on her situation permanently fixed with Mrs. Wyndham. That lady had, with the utmost delicacy made her frequent necessary presents, and had declared, that no event, but one eminently advantageous to her charming young friend, should ever separate them from each other. By the arrival of her boxes, harpsichord, &c. Augusta received a letter from her faithful servant Martha, who informed her she had experienced what her old master used to say, that good actions commonly, even in this life, meet a reward, but that she had no other wish in sending, or rather returning her lady's bounty, than the pleasure of rendering her service ; but that it had been a lucky thing for her, for that sweet pretty young gentleman, who Miss Augusta must recollect, had settled twenty pounds a year for her life upon her, to reward her for her generosity to her beloved mistress. While Augusta read this part of the letter, a thousand nameless emotions took instant possession of her heart, but the last words she had heard him utter, returned to her recollection, and all the pleasurable portion of the ideas changed to bitter anguish, on feeling the conviction of having for ever lost the esteem of a man, possessed of so many virtues. However, weighing the fortunate scale, and deeply impressed with gratitude to heaven for raising her up such a friend as her amiable Mrs. Wyndham, she bowed in obedience to its divine will, and sought to drive from her mind every idea, but those which inspired her thanksgivings.

The continued attentions of Sir Maurice Morgan, while they gave infinite pleasure to Mrs. Wyndham, created no return of tenderness in the bosom of Augusta, because she was unconscious of his feeling any more than that degree of respect, which she supposed men of worth felt, and expressed for women of character ; and her having received such instances of a contrary nature from the profligate set she had met at the vile Spencer's, confirmed her in the idea, that the notice he took of her, arose from that sentiment alone. This, although it flattered her *amour propre*, had no other visible or internal effect on her mind and inclinations.

Sir Maurice ventured one day to acquaint his aunt with the sincere affection he entertained for Augusta, and requested her advice as to the mode of making the confession to that young lady, as well as entreating her countenance to his addresses. " My good wishes, my dear Sir Maurice, you have had a long time, but you must not expect, or hope for my interference in the disposal of the heart. I know from experience it will not be dictated to. From the candour of Miss Monckley, you have this consolation, that you will not be kept in suspense. Should her heart be sensible of your worth, her blushing cheeks will pronounce your happiness. If it should be otherwise engaged, which indeed I do not think, the same love of truth and honour will inform you of it."

With all that timidity inherent to a true passion, Sir Maurice dreaded almost to make his affection known to the object of it, lest her refusal should rob him of his present happiness, in seeing her almost daily, and being received as a friend. Mrs. Wyndham, however,

was as desirous of bringing matters to an issue, which would prove of so much advantage to our heroine, and really reproached herself for having assured her nephew she should not interfere ; for fear her neutrality should have arisen from her views of interest, in detaining Augusta with her by way of assistant, in establishing the education of her children, who alone were dearer to her than her amiable friend ; she took occasion therefore frequently to speak in high terms of her nephew. Augusta joined most readily in his eulogium, but in a kind of way, that proved to Mrs. Wyndham, that she had not the slightest idea of his entertaining a partiality for herself, and that excellent woman condemned herself for thus artfully striving to develop the sentiments of Augusta ; it ~~was~~^{was} contrary to the rectitude of her heart, and might have been considered as a snare that would enable her to turn Augusta's opinion, given in the utmost security against her real inclinations, should they not be in favour of Sir Maurice Morgan. She rejected this crooked policy as disingenuous, and candidly avowed to our heroine the secret her nephew had intrusted her with, but said not one word that could bear, even by implication, a hint that she particularly wished to have the affair accomplished. Her delicacy of conduct was not lost upon her fair auditor, who drew this conclusion, that what she declined to press, was yet the ardent wish of Mrs. Wyndham's heart.

“ Had I been influenced by any vanity, my dear Madam,” she answered, “ I might probably have put what you say is the just construction, on the attentions shewn me by Sir Maurice Morgan. That I possessed a portion of his esteem, I will not pretend to deny

my belief of—but as it was evinced with the same polite and friendly behaviour he indiscriminately uses both to you and myself, my ignorance and inexperience in these affairs, rendered me totally insensible of those attentions having any other source than his regard for you might induce him to shew to a young woman happy in your protection. I allow Sir Maurice to be in possession of many amiable qualities, and an union with him would, in some situations, be a most desirable event to many women. He deserves the undivided, unoccupied heart of the person he honors with his. I have many and various reasons against marrying at all; I am alone in the world, without one connexion, nor know I of any other of the human race who has one drop of the blood that flows through my viens.”

“That, my love,” cried Mrs. Wyndham, “is an objection of the most futile nature. Indeed, many of my countrymen are most wonderfully tenacious of descent; but as your origin is involved in mystery, and as there are many reasons to suppose it is respectable, we may at least hazard such conjectures as are on the favourable side, admitting your own intrinsic worth, as well as personal merit, was not sufficient to do honour to any rank to which marriage might raise you, and you were once, I have heard, on the very eve of being married.”

“A design so evidently counteracted by the Divine will,” replied Augusta, “convinces me I ought never again to think of so serious an engagement. There were many pleas to induce me to consent to that union which does not, and, I hope, cannot, operate here. It will grieve me, that my resolution to continue single

should make Sir Maurice unhappy. I should be concerned very much to lose his friendship. Mine, if that can content him, will never know the least diminution ; but I would not do him so much injustice as to bind him by ties, to which my own heart could never accord. You may smile, my dear Madam, at the resolution of a woman, barely nineteen, declaring how fixed it is for the single state ; but my reasons are potent, and my destiny irreversible."

"Never, my beloved Augusta, will I urge you to act against your inclinations ; much as I love my nephew and am acquainted with his merit, will I say one word to influence you in a point that must depend upon yourself alone ; it would be an ill power, your gentleness gives me, thus to abuse it, and a cruel, a most ungrateful return for the delight and service your society has been to me. I well know," she added, sighing deeply, "that in a delicate and virtuous heart, the early impression of love takes a root that nothing can obliterate ; other connexions, for various reasons, may be formed, but the mind scarcely ever loses the remembrance of the first. I am convinced Sir Maurice will acquiesce with your determination. It will, no doubt, cost him some sighs, some pain ; but how much happier will he, some time, think himself, than he could have been, if a false refinement in you had induced your acceptance of his hand and heart, when your own, perhaps, too keenly, would continue to reflect on what you have lost."

"Oh ! lost, irremediably lost, indeed !" cried Augusta, who could not restrain her tears, on the mournful idea of having for ever lost the esteem and regard of the only man in the world who had touched her

heart. She plainly perceived that Mrs. Wyndham believed it was to the memory of Henry she was so deeply attached. She never could have assumed courage to convince that Lady how much she was mistaken, and, though she condemned her own want of candour, she qualified it a little, by hoping Sir Maurice Morgan would feel less chagrin in finding he had no living rival, and, as she had declared her resolution of never marrying, he would avoid the mortification of seeing any other man in the situation, his partiality for her had fancied must be the happiest state in the world.

Although the regard he professed for her was more ardent than he had ever felt for any other woman, yet Sir Maurice was not one of those despairing lovers who sink under the disappointment of their favourite hopes. He saw in a moment, by the features of Mrs. Wyndham, that he had nothing to expect. He adored Augusta for her frank conduct, and never distressed her by his fruitless importunities. Resting, however, a latent hope, that time might change her sentiments in his favour, and quietly acquiescing in her determination, he still continued to visit there as usual, and no one, who observed his mode of behaviour, would have supposed him to be a rejected lover or a favoured one. Augusta was extremely pleased and flattered by his procedure. She really regarded him more than any one in the world, except Mrs. Wyndham, for whom she felt an affection that was filial in the highest degree ; and as Sir Maurice appeared so satisfied with the belief that Henry alone engrossed her tenderness, she almost congratulated herself for having undesignedly led her friends into a mistake

that had such agreeable consequences; and, indeed, it made but little difference to her, for as she believed this amiable and beloved stranger was dead to her, it mattered not whether he was entombed in the earth or in her bosom.

CHAPTER XXIII.

FALSE HOPES.

A CIRCUMSTANCE arose one day, which inspired Sir Maurice Morgan with the idea of Augusta beholding him with more favourable sentiments, and for which he blessed the accident that discovered it to him. He had been riding a very unruly horse, one quite unused to that country, and which by kicking, plunging and rearing, had thrown himself and rider down a precipice, so near Wyndham Place, that he was conveyed thither immediately after the danger had happened, although providentially he had received as little injury as possible from his fall. The sight of a person brought in by the servants to the house, and the appearance of blood, recalling to the memory of Augusta all the fatal scenes of Henry's misfortune and death, overpowered her spirits so suddenly, that it was with the utmost difficulty she was prevented fainting. It would be but little compliment to the native softness and humanity of our heroine's heart, not to place some share of her concern for the object before her; but had not the image of Henry, and recollection of her

consequent sufferings operated powerfully on her agitated feelings, she would have had more command over them, and rather have assisted the poor bruised Baronet, than, by her fainting almost immediately, have called off the attention of every body to herself, at a time that he stood so much in need of every present help: — however, he thought himself amply recompensed by this instance of tenderness in a woman so dear to him, and gladly compounded for the delay, since caused by a circumstance he could not help translating so much to his own advantage, and which served to strengthen his affection for her, and fill him with hopes that she would, in time, feel such a return as he most ardently wished, and that of course her repugnance to enter into a matrimonial engagement would abate.

Augusta, whose sensibility had nothing of unamiable weakness in its composition, after the shock of the first few minutes, exerted herself in doing a thousand little services, which was the more necessary, as Mrs. Wyndham was out paying some morning visits, and it was a principle with Augusta, that the office of nurse should ever be sustained by the first people in the house, not discharged by servants. She scorned that false delicacy, or rather she knew not what it meant, that should make a young woman shrink from assisting one of the opposite sex, when a case of necessity and humanity demanded her attendance. She knelt down to draw off his stocking, and applied an embrocation with her own fair hand, which she had before prepared, saw that a bed was made ready, and when the servants had laid him on it, smoothed his pillow with the tenderness of a sister, and even held

the basin while the surgeon took some blood from the arm of Sir Maurice ; not from an officious zeal, or an affectation of more concern than she really felt, but because none of the female servants had the courage, or, as they termed it, ' the heart to do it.'

After administering every service she could to the poor patient, she left him to get some repose : for his acknowledgments of her kindness were oppressive to her, and occasioned too much emotion in himself, and as she did no more for him than her natural humanity prompted her, and which she would have bestowed on any subject in similar distress ;—she was pained by having a common exertion of duty so very much over-rated in his estimation.

Mrs. Wyndham had been apprized of the accident which happened to her nephew, and the effect of it on our heroine, with a thousand exaggerations from the servants, which had so greatly magnified her fears, that she could hardly believe her eyes when she saw Augusta sitting very composed with the children, who had been scarcely sensible of the nature of the affair that had happened, from the caution she had used in informing them of it ; for at the time the two girls had been amusing themselves in a little flower garden, which engaged much of their leisure hours and employment.

She related every thing that had happened, and attributed the effect it had upon herself, by assigning the true reason of recalling to her memory an event that she must ever deplore.—Mrs Wyndham thanked her in the most cordial and affectionate terms for having done all she could herself have wished, and was impatient to pay the Baronet a visit of condolence.

Augusta proposed going up softly to his room, rather hoping she should find the composing mixture the surgeon had ordered had lulled him into a sleep. With a step, as light as the feathered Mercury, she glided into the room, happy to see him quiet and composed, after such a shake of his whole frame. She stood some time looking on him as he slept, and then the idea of the contrast which poor Henry exhibited, in the last moments of his life, rushing with force upon her mind, she could not restrain her tears. Fearing her agitation might awaken Sir Maurice, she was just quitting the room. He roused himself, and calling to her, begged she would return. Indeed, he had not been insensible of her coming in, but thinking at first that it was one of the servants, and not being inclined to speak, he had laid still, and when he discovered, by a sweet exclamation in the softest under-breathing whisper, "Thank God he is better, as he sleeps so calmly!" he could not resist the fascinating joy of still supporting the semblance of sleep, that he might witness so delightful a tenderness in his beloved Augusta. Too flattering to his wishes, he placed her fixed look, and even her tears, to a growing affection for himself.

"Oh! dearest Miss Monckley," said he, "do not leave me. Your presence will be of more service than any that can be afforded me by the whole world beside. Have you been long in my room?" said he, artfully enough, for he did not wish her to believe he had been sensible of her coming in, as it would have indicated a want of ingenuity in himself.

"I was in hopes I should see you taking some

repose, and was just going to inform Mrs. Wyndham with so favourable a circumstance."

"But do not leave me," he cried.

"I promised to let your aunt know how you were. She is impatient to congratulate you on having so well escaped from such a dreadful accident." She hurried down to that Lady, who lost no time in going to her nephew, whose estimable character, even more than his relationship, had much endeared him to her.

"How much have I been shocked, my dear Maurice," cried Mrs. Wyndham, taking his hand, as she seated herself by his bedside, "by hearing of your imminent danger."

"Oh! rather, my dear Madam, congratulate me on the happiest event of my life—the prospect of having gained some interest in the bosom of the loveliest of women! How is my attachment each moment strengthened by the sweetness of her conduct! Had you but seen the quick sensibility which evinced itself by her fainting, and her attention to me the moment of her recovery, you would almost adore her as I do. Yes, let me again bless the chance, which has given me so indelible a proof that she feels a tender regard for me." He then candidly related to Mrs. Wyndham the little artifice he had been guilty of, and which had such flattering consequences in his opinion. Mrs. Wyndham, who had heard from Augusta the shock she had received by an appearance so similar to her dear Henry's, did not place so implicit a faith on the proofs of affection to Sir Maurice as he was inclined to believe himself; but properly judging that to controvert so pleasing an idea might counteract the means used for his recovery,

forbore to dash his hopes by the least surmise of his flattering himself too much, therefore only expressed, what indeed were her true sentiments, that nothing could give her greater satisfaction than to see he was not mistaken in his ideas, for her daughters were not dearer to her than both he, Sir Maurice, and the amiable Augusta.

He was never tired of making the eulogium of the latter ; but Mrs. Wyndham foreseeing he would irritate his nerves, told him, smiling, " She would leave him to his agreeable meditations, and thought it would be the better way to try to dream of that charming girl for the present, than to fatigue himself with talking of her, rest being absolutely necessary to keep off a fever, which was much to be dreaded as a cause of retarding his recovery." Advice, which he plainly saw the merit of, and promised to adopt, if she could engage Augusta to join her in the afternoon only for one half hour, that he might again be blessed with seeing her lovely face, and hearing the sweetest sounds to meliorate the pain his inward bruises frequently gave him.

Mrs. Wyndham could not help mentioning to our heroine the warm expressions of Sir Maurice Morgan's gratitude, and how much her kind attentions had increased his regard for her.

" Surely," cried Augusta, " I could not have done less for any one, even if he had not stood in so near a relationship to my dear Mrs. Wyndham ?"

" I hope, too," replied that Lady, " the merit of my nephew was an incitement ; at least," added she, " I find he is disposed to draw very flattering conclusions in his own favour from your conduct towards him."

“ I shall be extremely sorry,” returned Augusta, “ to have led him into an error by the most common effect of pity and compassion.”

“ Oh ! my love,” rejoined Mrs. Wyndham, “ the heart is prone to deceive itself ; and Sir Maurice will think, that in a bosom of so much pity and compassion, some will arise for the pain of his mind, as well as the anguish of his body.”

“ I wish most heartily I could remove both the one and the other,” answered Augusta. “ It grieves me most sensibly to hear you give such opinion, which, I doubt not, you have sufficient grounds for, of the sentiments of Sir Maurice. He is too worthy a character to be made unhappy ; but such is my wayward fortune, that I cannot use the means of rendering him otherwise. If it would afford him any satisfaction, I will give him the strongest assurances of never marrying any one else. The vow would be no sacrifice to me. My mind is fixed, and my affections deep buried.” In my heart she would have added, but her voice insensibly broke, and she could not proceed.

“ I will allow, my dear young friend, your early and deep disappointment may well make a lasting impression on your mind ; yet, still time may do much, and you may hereafter feel less repugnance to forming an union with another. Death, indeed, divided you from a man who was so soon to have been your husband. You consider your heart as a widowed heart. I respect your situation, so does my nephew. He has never importuned you to listen to his love, though I am convinced it has still been increasing for you.”

“ Oh !” cried Augusta, bursting into tears, “ Am I to be for ever wretched ! For ever torn from those

scenes! that are capable of soothing my afflicted soul!"

"My sweetest girl!" said Mrs. Wyndham, moved by her grief, and kissing her hand, "what is it you mean? For very far is it, both from the wish of Sir Maurice or me to make you wretched."

"Alas! my dear Madam," replied Augusta, "so much of comfort and consolation I have received from your amiable society, that it would break my heart to be forced to quit you, and yet can I stay with you to make Sir Maurice unhappy by a denial of his wishes? But a thousand insuperable bars prevent my compliance. For what wise purpose it is ordained I know not; but such has been my adverse fate from childhood, that I am almost inclined sometimes to think I was born only for misery, and to bring a curse, and not a blessing, on those who have sheltered me from the evils of life.—Oh!" she continued, "in the paroxysm of my beloved benefactor's delirium, when he lay on his death-bed, he reviled me for 'bringing ruin on his house, and himself, and only child, with sorrow to the grave.' I know he was not in possession of his senses when he uttered the bitterest imprecations on the hapless Augusta; but, alas! they were emphatic, and had too much truth: had he left me to perish with my parents, all this evil had been avoided: and now with you, who I love with the tenderest filial regard, the same cruel fate pursues me. Why should I be so unfortunate as to have inspired Sir Maurice with a fatal passion for me, to render him unhappy, and to deprive myself of your protection?"

"My beloved Augusta," cried Mrs. Wyndham, folding her arms round her, "do you think any

circumstance in life shall ever separate us? No, harbour not so ungenerous an idea of me; the excellence of your heart, and the sweetness of your manners, have created in me an affection which nothing can lessen. Ever will I be a mother to you, ever shall you be as dear to me as my own children. Weep not, my dearest girl, but look forward to that happiness you so well deserve to enjoy; it shall not be broken in upon by any consideration of what Sir Maurice may hope. I would not check those hopes immediately, for fear it should have a fatal consequence, which I see, from the too refined way of thinking you have indulged, you would place to your own account, and make it a new source of misery to yourself. When he is recovered, his own good sense will instruct him in the means of regaining that possession of rectitude that has ever guided his actions. Your heart is at present fixed on an object you have for ever lost. It is in vain to combat so amiable a prejudice. I feel, I should be the last person in the world to attempt it. I know the power of a first and early impression. It is not," rising with emotion, and walking a few paces from the table, "No, death itself has not the power of tearing it from the heart; time," she continued, "may in some people perform the office of the Lathian waters, and teach them to forget. To time must Sir Maurice submit. I am convinced he would not receive your hand, unless your heart accompanied it. His affection is too refined to feel any satisfaction in an union, where their regard was not mutual. You shall never be urged by him; and my love for you, should even protect you from importunity, if he was capable of offering it." This

affectionate address, and tender consideration, gave the utmost delight to the heart of Augusta, and restored peace to her bosom. Mrs. Wyndham was as dear to her as if she had been her mother, and since the death of her beloved Mr. Monckley, she had never loved any one with that degree of affection she felt for this amiable woman, whose mind was perfectly congenial with her own. She feared this unfortunate partiality of Sir Maurice, would be a continued source of affliction to her. Her heart indeed was too much attached, ever to feel an affection for any other man, though she ceased not to condemn the weakness which enslaved it. However, that was not the whole of the reason that determined her never to marry : the mystery of her origin, and the cruel distresses the attempt to develope it had involved her in, was a constant anguish to her soul. Her character had suffered in the opinion of the man most dear to her in the world. It was out of her power to clear her fame from obliquy and contempt. If she should consent to marry Sir Maurice, how should she ever appear in society, where she might be liable to meet some of those persons who had seen her with the vile Spencer ? No opportunity had offered to relate any of these circumstances to Mrs. Wyndham, and how could she begin the horrid story ? Mr. Bendley had never hinted it to that lady, and therefore she judged it imprudent to enter upon it. Indeed it was too humiliating to attempt it. Living thus retired from a world, of which she had only seen that part the most profligate and infamous, she wished never to behold it more. But the wife of Sir Maurice Morgan must associate with high life, and be exposed

to the recognition of some of those wretches, who had perhaps visited at Mrs. Spencer's. Thus a thousand cogent reasons, urged her strongly to refuse every overture of marriage, both now, and at any future time. Indeed, she had seen but very little of the world. The situation in which she had been brought up by Mr. Monckley, precluded all knowledge but what she had gained from books; her reading had been extensive, but her study rather taught her what the world should be—not what it was. Her mind was of a reflective cast, and the circumstances of her early misfortunes, had increased that turn. She reasoned with depth on the occurrences that had befallen her. Wisdom is the growth of experience—her experience indeed had not been great, but she considered experience not so much the growth of action, but of reflection on it. In an active life are sown the seeds of wisdom, but they who reflect not, never reap, have no harvest from it, but carry the burthen of old age without the wages of experience. But the habit of reflecting had given her a full harvest, and the result of which was, that she had seen enough to give her a distaste to mixed societies, and to look forward only to a calm retreat of elegant retirement in the enjoyment of a friend, such as she believed and hoped she had met with in Mrs. Wyndham.

Common humanity, however, led her to attend her friend to the room of Sir Maurice in the afternoon. They found him inclined to a good deal of fever, therefore only remained a very short time with him. Augusta could not rally her spirits, which the emotions of the morning had in a great measure oppressed; nor were they raised, by finding that Sir Maurice was

inclined to construe her more than ordinary silence to her tender fears on his account. She feared, and fancied she foresaw much difficulty when he should recover, to convince him he had not obtained more interest in her bosom than he had held before. Her friendship for Mrs. Wyndham increased each day, and the knowledge that they were both attached to the memories of those they had for ever lost, and that in person there was so strong a resemblance, shewed a sympathy of mind, which although the knowledge of that circumstance was alone confined to her bosom, rivetted her affections more closely to that excellent woman. Often did she wish Mrs. Wyndham to make her the confidant of an attachment, which had left so indelible a stamp on her heart; but she could not ask it, since she was debarred from imparting her own grievances in return. She was sensible her's were too weak and foolish, to bear the test of examination. Her mind was fixed on a vain shadow, which notwithstanding her hourly condemnation, she could not relinquish. How then could she expose a folly, and yet continue in it, without subjecting herself to ridicule?

For some days Sir Maurice was, by the express order of his physicians, kept extremely quiet, nor was suffered to be spoken to by any one. This caution had the most salutary effects in reducing his fever, and at the end of the week, the ladies were permitted to visit him, and sit an hour or two with him. He soon recovered well enough to be led into Mrs. Wyndham's dressing-room, and then had the happiness of daily enjoying the society of Augusta, and unfortunately too for him, feeling each hour his

attachment increased by her winning and fascinating manners, as each hour discovered fresh beauties in her mind. One day the conversation happened to turn on superstition, and the predilection which some weak persons have to lucky or unlucky days. "It may be a weakness perhaps in me," said Sir Maurice, "but I shall ever look on last Tuesday se'nnight as the luckiest day of my life."

"It was lucky indeed," answered Mrs. Wyndham; "but I think only lucky, because you did not break your neck—you had a most marvellous and providential escape; if your clothes had not been caught by the stump of a tree, you would have fallen a depth of fifty feet further: thus far I will allow you were very lucky, my dear nephew, but surely you were out of luck in meeting with such an unlucky horse." "No," cried he, taking Augusta's hand, "I will continue to my life's end to say, it was the happiest day of my life; it was the day which gave me assurances, the most sweet and flattering, that Maurice was not altogether indifferent to the loveliest of women." Augusta changed colour, and seemed visibly agitated. "Sir Maurice—Mrs. Wyndham;" she stopped for want of breath. "What would you say, my divine Augusta? not any thing, I trust, to damp my happiness." "Mrs. Wyndham," she replied, with great emotion, "will explain the nature of my distress on that day. Indeed I must leave the room." "And leave me tortured with suspense, Miss Monckley?" "I wish from my soul," she cried, "I could relieve your suspense without adding to your pain, but to your hopes I cannot give sanction. You must excuse me; I am deeply distressed; pray allow me to

retire a few moments." The disappointment that sat on the brow of Sir Maurice, affected his aunt; "I wish it were otherwise, my dear nephew," said she, "but it is plain you have flattered yourself too much; the affections of Miss Monckley lie buried in the grave of Henry; she assured me so sometime since, and further declared, that she would freely enter into an engagement, if that would satisfy you, never to marry any one."

"What a wretch must I be," returned Sir Maurice, "to exact so unreasonable a promise! I then should deserve the anguish I feel, with the addition of being detested by the object of my love. But you have had some conversation then with Augusta on this subject? Oh! my dear Madam, perhaps you were too urgent in your nephew's cause, and your well-intended zeal has failed in its purpose."

"I have certainly had the conversation you mention: I thought it but just to let Miss Monckley know the conclusion you had drawn from her fainting. Had it proceeded from her tender attachment to you, it would have given me the sincerest joy to have communicated such glad tidings, and justified your hopes: but when I learned from her confession, that the similar appearance young Monckley bore to your's, and the recollection of her former and consequent sufferings had overpowered her senses, I wished her to restrain all those pleasing attentions, which, from humanity and friendship, she was disposed to shew you, apprehending you would place their cause to a source that had no foundation. It is clear, my dear Sir Maurice, you have already done so. You may always retain the esteem and friendly regard of this

amiable girl; but her heart is deeply, irrevocably fixed, and if compassion, or consideration, of what she fancies she owes to me, should induce her to sacrifice her feelings to your importunity, I much fear it would not be productive of happiness to you, any more than herself."

"Never," cried he with energy, "could I be so base as to wish her to make such a sacrifice. Could I inspire her gentle heart with a tenderness equal to my own, I should be the happiest of men; but thinking as I do of her, I am convinced I shall feel infinitely more satisfied by possessing her esteem and confidential friendship, and sometimes enjoying her charming society, than I could, by her taking a 'loveless, joyless, vow,' which would give me the possession of her person without her heart: then she would look on me, most deservedly, as her enemy; one who, basely to gratify himself, had forced her to wretchedness. No, lovely and beloved Augusta, I will deserve, and, if possible, obtain your regard, by the sacrifice I make of my unfortunate attachment to your peace."

Mrs. Wyndham, in rapture, threw her arms round his neck, and, while the tears trickled down her cheeks, she could not help exclaiming, "Excellent heroic Maurice! you deserve not only the esteem of Augusta, but of the whole world. How do I congratulate my beloved nephew on this noble exertion of honour and just principles. Suffer me to seek Miss Monckley; receive her assurances of perpetual amity, and let us be from this day united in the strictest bonds of friendship. It will be a relief to her gentle and amiable heart. She has been, and is still, apprehensive, that, whenever this matter was brought to an *ecclaircisse-*

ment, that a separation between her and me must be the consequence. I am impatient to explain to her your elevated and uncommon sentiments."

"And I am likewise impatient too, my dear Madam, that her mind should be relieved from her present feelings, and would gladly fly to her myself;" but, affecting a gaiety, to conceal the disappointed hope that pained his heart, and wrung sighs of anguish from it, "you must make allowance from my crippled state of limbs, which will not keep pace with my wishes."

Mrs. Wyndham found Augusta in tears. "Come, my sweetest friend," said she, affectionately kissing her moistened cheek, "let me lead you to the most noble-minded of men. Sir Maurice intreats to be your friend and brother. Never will you again hear him mention a subject to which you are averse. Be cheerful, my love, and recover your spirits. We shall all be happy, and nothing shall ever separate me from my dear, my valued companion."

On their return into the dressing-room, Sir Maurice was leaning his head pensively on his hand, inwardly regretting the cruel necessity of his resolution, though strictly resolved to be governed by it. Mrs. Wyndham presented Augusta to him as an inestimable friend, who would regard him as an affectionate brother.

"And will Sir Maurice Morgan allow me to view him in that honoured light?" asked Augusta, with the sweetest tone of voice.

He clapped his hands together, and fixed his eyes upon her, in which a mournful expression of tenderness prevailed for some moments without speaking;

then, taking her hand, said, with a heavy sigh, "Oh! that I had exchanged situations with your loved Henry!"

"Come, come," cried Mrs. Wyndham, who wished to give the conversation a less *sombre* cast, "this is not in the bond; I do not see it in the bond," and taking each of their hands in her own, "Let the world shew three people whose friendship is more strongly united than ours. Augusta and I will drink half a glass of wine extraordinary at supper to our triple alliance, and when you are able, we will allow you to pledge us in a bumper. Bid your brother Maurice a good night, my dear girl, for we have over staid our time, and it is the hour he should prepare for that repose which we both most sincerely wish him."

Mrs. Wyndham thought it most prudent to leave him, that he might strengthen his mind in his good resolution of subduing his attachment, which would not be so difficult in the absence of its object, as by his looks she conjectured it was while he fixed his eyes so tenderly upon her. She would not suffer the conversation to be prolonged, therefore took Augusta away with her directly. Our heroine flattered herself she should now be as happy as she ever expected to be in this life, and the renewed professions of regard, and constant friendship, from Mrs. Wyndham, set her mind perfectly at ease.

During the time of confinement to Sir Maurice, she received not a word or look from him but what she approved; and as soon as he could be removed, he returned to his own house, which was but a morning's ride from Wyndham Place; yet, although he had never had any reasonable hopes to encourage him,

he still had very much flattered himself with a growing partiality in the bosom of Augusta, and his disappointment set heavy, though silent, in his heart.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE MINIATURE PICTURE.

We left Lord Glamore travelling with all expedition to Bath, from the information he had received from Martha, of Augusta's being in that city. He found his servant, who related to him the circumstance of having seen Miss Monckley at the Abbey church, following her to Lady Mackannon's, and delivering the letter he had had so long in his possession for that purpose. Believing Augusta was still with her Ladyship, he lost no time in going instantly to her house, and inquiring if Miss Meyrick was there ; the footman left him for a moment, to let Lady Mac. know a gentleman wanted to see her companion, who was gone out some hours before.

On hearing he was a very handsome, elegant, young man, a sort of beings her old Ladyship was very partial too, she requested the favour of his company upstairs. He had never had the honour of seeing the Lady before, and her exterior gave him no very favourable impression. Indeed, if it had, it would have been short-lived, for her address to him would have counteracted the influence the most beautiful countenance could have exercised over his faculties.

With the harshest dissonance of voice she said, "So, Sir, I find you have come hither after that creature. I know not what name to call her by; she went by two at least." Lord Glamore bowed, not quite knowing what he should say.

"Well, I dare say, she is no better than she should be. People do not conceal themselves for nothing, or for any good; and, after all, she had the squeamish air of objecting to a party I had last night at cards. To be sure I was very angry with her for her impertinent reflections; but a game of cribbage among friends, is as innocent as carrying on intrigues with men I hope, and that, I can answer for her, she has done. It was but yesterday she received a letter from some of her fellows, and when I taxed her with it, you never heard such a fury as Madam made of herself."

To put a stop to this gentle Lady, Lord Glamore ventured to say, he should be happy to see Miss Meyrick.

"Aye, whether Meyrick, or Monckley, it is all one; she is gone."

"Gone! Where, Madam, is she gone? My letter yesterday required so particular an answer, that, to hear she has not noticed it, fills me with the utmost concern."

"Oh! I suppose you are one she has jilted. She thought to take my nephew in; perhaps you may know him, the honourable Harry Neville, one of the handsomest young men in England; but he saw through her directly." Lord Glamore still urged to know where she was.

"I know not, not I. Most likely you will meet with her in Avon-street."

“Where, Madam, in Avon-street can I find her ? To see her is of the utmost consequence.”

“Why, in some of the houses where such sluts resort, I suppose. I dare say she is well known there.”

“Has she then left your house, Madam ?”

“Why, I told you she put herself into a violent passion, and abused me like a pick-pocket. I saw how it was. I don’t doubt but she thought you would follow your letter, so she was determined to be off, and therefore picked a quarrel with me to get away.”

Lord Glamore, exceedingly discomfited arose ; Lady Mac. pressed him to stay, and even invited him to her private party in the evening. He made his apology, and, on his retiring, her Ladyship, who was charmed with his figure, declared, “she must be a strange devil, indeed, to fly from such a man !”

Now entirely at a loss, Lord Glamore knew not where to begin his fruitless search, and condemned himself not a little for having his heart irrevocably fixed so unworthily, not that he gave much credit to the reports of Lady Mac. but from the conviction that Augusta could not clear her fame from the censures she had incurred by living a fortnight in an infamous brothel : nor could he, he thought, have a stronger proof than her flying away from him, without offering to justify herself, when she might plainly see the power she had over him was so extensive, that he would have been but too ready to give belief to her assertions of innocence, resolved then to think of her no more, as the first step towards conquest, he ordered his carriage, and proceeded to London. It was difficult for a heart, attached as his, to force himself to resolve to forget her ; but totally out of his power

to advance in his cure, when the sight of any female, who in age, size, shape, or complexion, similar to her's, threw him into the most violent palpitations ; so, like the stricken deer, he bore the barbed shaft deep in his bosom, unable to extricate himself from the arrow which drank his life's blood. He recollected he had promised to reward the faithful Martha, for her uncommon generosity to her mistress. He went to a lawyer to execute an annuity for that purpose, and sending it down to Mrs. Williams, proved how little he had advanced in his promised conquest, for he failed not to request of Martha to let him know, as soon as she should herself discover, the new retreat of Augusta, and inclose a letter for his valet Wilson, to be left at the St. Alban's tavern.

He mixed with the society of his own rank in life ; but he entered both into the pleasures and business of the world as a man does, who takes no interest in the various employments which seem to occupy him. He wandered from place to place like the ghost of himself, who delighted to trace those scenes that had in life been pleasing to him. His mother, who, it has been observed, regarded him with the utmost affection, lamented the change in his spirits and health, and earnestly solicited to know the cause.

He evaded all her interrogatories, or turned them quite aside. His guarded silence prevented farther importunity ; but still more confirmed her that he inwardly mourned some irremediable misfortune. His melancholy air grew infectious. She caught it, and, perhaps, never were there two more wretched beings than Lady Glamore and her amiable son, who, though affectionately loving each other, yet so indus-

triously guarded their inward feelings, lest they should increase their mutual distress.

It became necessary for Lord Glamore to look over his father's *secretaire* for some papers relative to a mortgage, which, if he had lived a few weeks longer, would have been fore-closed. In seeking the documents, by which he was to act, he found a small oval shagreen case. What was his astonishment, mixed with the severest grief, when, on opening it, he discovered it to be a miniature of Augusta ! Volumes of proofs of her dishonour could not have equalled this in his idea. He started, as if he had seen a spectre : but still he gazed, till, as Othello said, "the sense ached" on this bewitching resemblance of the only woman he could ever love. The soft, the innocent look of her lovely blue eyes, rivetted his to the picture, till he almost thought the charming lips reproved him for having ever thought hardly of her. To part with it required more philosophy than he had power to exercise. His heart shuddered when he did so, but he could not avoid pressing the inanimate representation to his lips and bosom. "Oh ! why, why am I deprived of this blessing, this transport, from the lovely original ?" he cried, with fervor : "Oh ! happy resemblance of the loveliest of women ! Can I ever part with thee ?" he immediately procured a piece of ribbon, and suspended it round his neck : "No, at least this is allowed me," said he, "and never will I part with so true a transcript of my Augusta's face. Oh ! that her mind had corresponded, I should have been the most blest of mortals !" Instead, therefore, of conquering his attachment, his almost hourly contemplation of this inimitable miniature, rivetted his

chains more strongly. Each hour of his life he became more interested in the wish to discover her retreat, and to learn her vindication from her own lips. Often as he gazed with fond delight on the picture, he would exclaim, "Can such loveliness, such innocence of countenance, conceal a depraved heart? No, it is impossible. Oh! sweet original of this enchanting picture, do but clear thyself from the imputation of guilt, at least from the most fatal part of it to my love, and I will wear thee in my heart for ever!"

Almost every day he either sent Wilson, or went himself, to the St. Alban's, to enquire for a letter—every day producing a disappointment to his eager, never-failing hopes.

Lady Glamore earnestly wished to see her son married, and various proposals were made to him for the purpose of selecting some object who could make him happy. He felt within himself but one woman in the world had the power, and nothing could shake his fixed resolution of seeking happiness with no other, still preserving the idea of uniting himself to her at all events, either by the ties of marriage, if her virtue had escaped injury, or by those of love alone, should she be able but to convince him she had had no connexion with his father. Thus was he determined at any rate to live with the object of his affection, a happy if not a respectable, life; but neither his honour or his love would allow him to think of any other woman.

Foiled in this wish, Lady Glamore then urged him to make the tour of his estates, or more properly those which had devolved to her by the death of her only brother, the Earl of Brandon, and whose portrait

had attracted the fixed attention of our heroine at Brandon Castle, from its exact resemblance to the man, whose image, in spite of her reason, lived in her heart. To get rid of himself, or at least for a while to forget the grief which he saw his mother felt, occasioned by his settled melancholy, he undertook his journey into South Wales ; but went round by Malvern to call on Martha, and to view the Rock and Beach where he had first seen Augusta. This excursion took up some of the time which lay so heavy on his hands, and employed, if it did not amuse, his mind.

Of his old friend Martha he could gain no information. She had left Mrs. Williams several weeks, and had taken all the effects which our heroine had remaining at her house, when she had quitted it with Mrs. Spencer.—Indeed, after Martha had received the annuity, she thought she might do very well without engaging in servitude, as she said, and therefore, as soon as she had dispatched all her Lady's property, and had the prudence to conceal where it was to be sent, retired into another part of Devonshire among her own relations, judging it quite time enough to write to the St. Alban's tavern when, for her own convenience, she wanted a second half year of her estate, which she boasted of.

Lord Glamore then made his way to Brandon Castle ; on his arrival there, and announcing himself to be the son of the late Lord Brandon's sister, the old house-keeper was most wonderfully struck with his figure, and almost thought he was the spirit of the Earl, who lost his life by a fatal accident. "Never," said she, "was there a more perfect likeness ;" and

she led him to the room, where hung his uncle's picture ; the resemblance between himself and the portrait he was sensible of the first moment he beheld it. "Aye," cried the old woman, "methinks I see my dear Lord this moment before me ; he could not be many years older than your Lordship when he died, and I dare say, when I last saw him here, that your ages were just the same. Aye, there is a lady in this neighbourhood, that is, not above twelve or fourteen miles from hence, who would almost expire if she was to see you ; her carriage stopped here sometime ago, but she could not come into the house."

"Was she then attached so tenderly to my uncle?"

"Attached ! yes, yes, she was indeed—why she was very near being married to him, but some how he fell in love with another, and her he married, against the consent of the old Lord. Oh, what a dreadful scene was here, when it was found out ! Lord Clinton, as he was then called, was turned out of the house, with the heaviest curses on himself and posterity. He lived abroad some years, but his father would never forgive or see him, though Miss Morgan, the poor lady whom he had forsaken, frequently went on her knees to implore my old Lord's pardon of his offence, and that he would see him again. After two years this amiable lady married Squire Wyndham, but her heart, I believe, still was fixed on Lord Clinton ; and this picture was torn down, and thrown among some lumber ; however, since the death of the old Earl, which was quickly followed by that of this dear gentleman, his wife and child, I, who had ever loved and pitied him, got the portrait, had it cleaned, and restored him to his own place. There was a beautiful young lady

came with the Miss Wyndham's to see the castle, and Lord have mercy, how she changed colour when her eyes first saw it. She could not turn away from that side of the room, and when we went into the next, she stole back again, and on our going in search of her, I saw the tears trickling down her cheeks as she was intently gazing at it."

"Had she heard the story, or did she know any thing of the family and misfortunes of Lord Brandon?"

"No, I believe not, my Lord, it seemed to me a kind of surprise mixed with grief—perhaps she might find some resemblance in it to somebody she had formerly known." Lord Glamore felt a kind of interest which impelled him to ask what sort of person the lady had? and whether she recollected her? "Oh, I should know her from a thousand," she answered, "my eyes, I think, never saw so sweet a creature, and as they staid a long time in this room, and her emotion on seeing the portrait had affected me, I looked at her attentively; she is tall, but not too tall neither; rather the full middle size. Her complexion is fair and clear, her eyes blue, and beautiful dark lashes, which gave a brilliant, yet soft look to them; but her voice was the most harmonious I ever heard, and gentle as a dove." "Oh, God," cried Lord Glamore, "it must be her, and her alone!" then taking the picture from his bosom, "Did she resemble this miniature?" "Did she! why if I live, this is the picture of that charming young lady; there are her eyes, and her sweet mouth — what an angelic creature — well, this is odd indeed — how very strange!"

“And is she at Mrs. Wyndham’s? And where does that lady live?” On receiving the information, he could not help exclaiming, “how fortunate, how very fortunate was this visit into South Wales!” Then amply rewarding the house-keeper for the trouble he had given her, and the transport her intelligence conveyed to him, he told her very probably he should return soon, and order the castle to be put into repair. A thousand tender hopes rushed on his mind, and filled his bosom with the most delicious sensations. “At least, my adored Augusta is with a respectable family. I have heard my mother speak of Mrs. Wyndham with the utmost esteem. Her mind then is not vitiated. Some interposing angel may have preserved her person from impurity; oh, that I may be so blessed as to find her as virtuous as she is beautiful! and to gaze on my resemblance! to drop tears in contemplating it! ah, my loved Augusta! have I not done the same by this dear miniature? but the tears which now dim my eyes, are those of transport ineffable, from the blissful idea that I may find you, all my fondest hopes incline me to believe.” The mountainous face of the country he could not but execrate, as it retarded the expedition he wished to use, in flying to the beloved object of his tenderest affections. He anticipated the joys of meeting with her, as the prelude to an eternal union, which the rectitude of his heart, and the sanguine wishes of his imagination, hoped would be honourable. He had ample time for reflection, while he pursued his route over the Carmarthen mountains, and deliberated on the means he should use to get a sight of Augusta. Why she should fly from him he knew not; but it was plain,

from the information he had received, both from David Macready, and Lady Mackannon, that she wished to avoid him, and yet his letter had breathed nothing but the most ardent and honourable proposals, if she could clear her conduct from the imputation fixed on it, by having voluntarily resided more than a fortnight under the abandoned roof of Mrs. Spencer. Chilling doubts overwhelmed his heart, but he still rested on that candour which characterized itself in her face, and trusted that he should discover, from the first interview, whether she was a proper object to share his fortune with his hand.

As he could form no plan for making his entre at Wyndham Place, he resolved to reconnoitre the premises first, and endeavour to come upon her by surprise, lest the apprehension of seeing him should again make her escape from his view. He ordered his chaise to stop at the entrance of a green lane which led to a paddock, wherein stood the house and gardens. Chance stood his friend, by leading him to a cultivated eminence in the paddock, from whence there was a communication through the garden. Among the shrubs he concealed himself some time, in hopes he might either behold Augusta (the fineness of the morning inducing him to suppose she might be walking in that sweet retreat) or at least that he might see some of the domestics, and get a letter conveyed to her hand.

The morning's avocation being completed, the two girls, Caroline and Louisa, were as usual, cultivating their favorite flower-garden. Mrs. Wyndham was gone to see Sir Maurice Morgan, and Augusta took a book, and strolled to a seat in the shrubbery, from

which the white turrets of Brandon Castle, could, on a clear day, be plainly seen. Never could she behold those turrets, without annexing the idea of the portrait she had seen there, so like the picture in her heart. She gazed on the venerable structure, till her dimmed eyes could no longer behold it through the medium of her tears.

“ Oh thou rich casket of a precious gem,” said she softly, “ which I shall never behold again ; I will look at thee no longer ; what never !” she repeated, casting up her eyes—she gave a shriek, thinking her over-heated fancy had conjured up the form that now stood before her. She started on her feet in the utmost terror, and would instantly have fled away, but they were spell-bound, and unable to aid her with motion.

“ Oh ! do not fly from me !” cried Lord Glamore, approaching her ; “ Do not let me always thus find you cruelly determined to escape me ! Think what I have suffered since last I saw you !”

“ Recall it not to my tortured memory !” answered Augusta, turning from him in agony, thinking he meant when he saw her at the gala.

“ But, why then,” said he, taking her hand, “ why would you secrete yourself from me ? What was my misery when I returned, and found the chairman had carried you I knew not whither ?”

“ You !” she repeated, and added, with a soft, tender voice, “ Was it then from you I fled ?” A rosy blush overspreading her face, convinced her she had expressed herself too warmly : but continued, “ From whence came you ?”

“ Do you see yon castle ?” cried he, with a smile,

occasioned by the tenderness she had displayed, and the recollection of what the house-keeper had related of her emotion on viewing the portrait, to which he bore so strong a resemblance: "And I have been told the loveliest of women was once there; and I was likewise told that here I should find her. Oh! let me not find her cruelly disposed to make me miserable! Suffer me to seat you, and place myself beside you, and then only tell me, why you would not answer my letter?"

"What letter?"

"I fear," he replied, his heart giving way to former suspicions, "that you could not answer it as my fond wishes hoped."

"I certainly could not answer it."

"Oh, God!" he exclaimed, interrupting her speech, "then too sure were my apprehensions."

"You talk in riddles to me; I do not understand you," she replied.

"Then I will explain myself, and know the utmost severity of my ~~letter~~ Of my sentiments of you, you can entertain no doubts, after my explicit declaration of them: nor will I scruple to repeat, that you are dearer to me than my life. Something is due to the world's appearance, and if you can clear yourself from the imputation of having willingly put yourself under the protection of my father."

"Your father!" cried Augusta, in a voice of terror: "was Lord Glamore, then, your father? Oh! what misery, to owe such destruction of all my happiness to your father!" Her tears could no longer be restrained; they fell in a copious shower, as she leaned on the side of the bench to support herself.

“ Yes, Augusta, Lord Glamore was my father ; and if you own he was the destroyer of your happiness, too surely mine is equally his victim : but that I may now know the whole of my misery, only answer me candidly this one question ; for although I am debarred the felicity of uniting myself to you by the honourable ties of marriage, yet so dear are you to my heart, so necessary to my happiness, that I cannot live without you. I care not if you tell me fifty men have been happy in your embraces, only assure me that my father never was admitted to your arms, and then I’ll sacrifice all hopes of family, fortune, and fame, to be your’s for ever. This day—this hour—nay, this minute,” cried he, with earnestness, pressing his arms round her waist, “ shall unite us to our lives’ end.”

She started from his incircling arms.—“ My Lord,” she answered, in a voice almost suffocated by indignant pride, “ you have debased me by your cruel supposition. I condescend not to undeceive you, but leave you to the remorse of one day, knowing you have persecuted a helpless orphan, that you might ‘slay her who was vexed at heart.’ Leave me, nor ever seek to oppress me again by your presence.” She was hurrying from him towards the garden.

“ What but madness, the utmost folly of a maniac,” cried he, “ could have induced me to doubt before ? Was not this picture a proof sufficient of your dishonour ? Here, take the resemblance of the loveliest countenance, concealing a corrupted mind. Fool that I was, to doat on it to distraction as I have done ; but thus I tear it, and its original, from my heart for ever !” He snatched the miniature from the ribband, and dashed it on the ground, hastily flying down the



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declivity of the shrubbery, left Augusta almost petrified with horror. She stood some moments like the statue of despair : nor when she quitted her place, or how she got into the garden, she knew not. The moment she passed the iron gate, that led to a gravelled terrace, her senses entirely forsook her. One of the gardeners saw her enter, and saw her fall on the ground. He ran to assist in raising her up, and found her in strong convulsions. With some difficulty he conveyed her into the house, and the servants had just carried her up to her chamber in a state of insensibility, when Mrs. Wyndham came home. On the first notice of her favourite being ill, she flew to her ; but from the disordered state of her mind, could learn nothing of the cause or nature of her illness, which had the most alarming appearance.

Numberless were the questions Mrs. Wyndham asked, but no one could resolve them. The children were certain she had had no letter. They had never seen her better than at the moment she had left them, and not an hour had passed in absence from her. No one had been there. Mrs. Wyndham dispatched a servant for the physician who had attended Sir Maurice. The violence of her successive fits seemed to abate, but a torpid insensibility still remained. She talked in a low voice to herself ; the sounds could not be understood. Her affectionate friend was almost in a state of distraction. She was convinced no common incident could have occasioned such a total derangement of her mind. She made the servants search all round the premises, to discover any object that might have terrified her. Nothing could be found. At last one of the men brought in a book, which Caroline said

Miss Monckley had taken, and a miniature picture they had found on the grass : "Look, Mamma," cried Louisa, "it is Miss Monckley's own picture."

This incident served as a little clue to Mrs. Wyndham. She conjectured, that she neither carried this picture about her, nor could the sight of it have had such an extraordinary effect on her mind. "She has seen some one, no doubt," she said to herself. "Oh ! there is some mystery in this dear girl's story, which I do not understand ; that she is unhappy, I fear ; that she is amiable, I know, and I love her with the affection of a mother. Never will I forsake her, and, I hope when she is able to confide to me this mystical appearance, it will be in my power to soften her sorrows."

CHAP. XXV.

THE EXPERIMENT.

On the arrival of Dr. Watkins, Mrs. Wyndham related to him all she herself could learn of the nature of our heroine's disorder, the cause of which being still a mystery, furnished nothing but conjectures to go upon. When the physician examined his patient, he was convinced that the occasion of her fever was from some heavy blow on her spirits. Her head was confused, and she gave very little indication of returning reason. He had frequent opportunities of seeing her during his attendance on Sir Maurice Morgan, and to see Augusta, and become interested for her was the same thing. Her sense, her elegance of form, her beauty, and the uncommon sweetness of her man-

ners, never failed to engage the affections of every one who had the happiness of being acquainted with her. While Mrs. Wyndham sat weeping by her bedside, Dr. Watkins stood looking on her, as he held her hand in his, to watch the varied vibrations of her pulse, and, on seeing so lovely a creature sinking under the pressure of some hidden and deep distress, the quick tears rolled down his venerable cheeks."

"Sweet, tender blossom!" cried he, "how art thou blighted! Hard must that heart be who could thus wring thine, and deprive such an excellent understanding of its reason!"

"Oh! my dear doctor," sobbed Mrs. Wyndham, "what can be done to restore this beloved girl? I know not how it is, but I feel such an attachment to her, that, had she been my child, my apprehensions and grief could not be enlarged. Not a day passes without her discovering new perfections; not a day, but some instances of her benevolence and charity shew how excellent is her heart! If we lose her, how shall we all support ourselves? The whole house adores her, and every servant bears testimony to her worth by their tears and lamentations."

"I hope, my dear Madam, we shall be able to reduce the violence of this fever, and get her head more composed. I think I have heard you say she was but just recovered from illness when you first brought her hither?"

"Yes, Mr. Bendley told me she had a very dangerous fever while she was at Bath, and, now I mention him, would it not be better, doctor, to send to him? He has known the dear girl from childhood, and may possibly be acquainted with some parts of her history

that might lead us to the cause. There has always been a depression on her spirits : I attributed that to her grief for a young man with whom she was brought up, and who was killed by a fall from his horse the evening before she was to have been married to him : but this picture being discovered, makes my conjectures wander to some other source, both from her former dejection and present illness. You see it has been torn with violence from something, as the ring is bent, and a piece of black ribband was in it that was evidently forced asunder. I cannot find that any body had been at the house, or inquired after her ; but yet I must believe she has seen some one who had her picture, and, perhaps, some fit of jealousy in the person has occasioned this dreadful illness in her. Sweet creature ! she could never have given any one cause to be angry with her. How delightfully has she conducted herself towards my nephew, who still adores her, though she refused his addresses, as much as he could have done if she had accepted them. Shall I send an express for Mr. Bendley ? He is the only one left of her old friends."

" It would be a comfort to her, no doubt, to see him if she should recover her senses. At present she knows no one. I hope, when these *cataplasms*, which I have ordered to her feet, begin to take effect, that, by the revulsion, we shall be able to remove the disorder from her head. I cannot hear a word she says, though she is continually talking."

Mrs. Wyndham knelt down, and kissing her cheek, applied her ear close to her lips ; but her voice was so low, that the sentences she uttered with great quickness could not be understood. For three days did this

strange delirium remain unabated, baffling the utmost exertion which skill, joined to the sincerest inclinations of service in her friendly physician, could use for her amendment; and, although she was not constantly delirious afterwards, yet her senses were confused, and herself unable, if she had even been urged to disclose the cause of her malady. Her youth, and natural good constitution, at length got the better of this severe attack, and in about a fortnight she was just able to quit her bed for an hour or two. But the deepest sorrow seemed rooted in her heart, and the pensive grief that pervaded her, prevented Mrs. Wyndham searching into the cause, lest talking on a subject she feared she could not remove, might still agitate her more, and occasion a relapse. She rather strove to make her forget her distresses by a thousand little amusements as her mind could bear them, and the grateful Augusta endeavoured to appear engaged by, and interested in them, though it was plain to Mrs. Wyndham how much she suffered from this forced exertion.

When her reasoning faculties had acquired their usual tone and efficacy, Augusta began to reflect on what had passed in this fatal interview. She recollected every word that had been uttered to her, and even blamed that pride which had prevented her explaining the truth of her situation in London, and how she had been betrayed to the house of the infamous Mrs. Spencer.

We never attempt to draw a perfect character; the shade in our heroine's was pride—she knew not how she came by it, but it was unconquerable. She always started from undeserved reproof, and scorned to

enter into a defence of herself, when wrongfully accused. Too conscious of her own innocence, she did not recollect in time, that appearances may sometimes overshadow the fairest character, and render it obnoxious to censure ; and once when she was but nine years old, a little circumstance happened, that discovered how strong and innate this trait was in her principles.

Mrs. Rachael Monckley had a favourite tea-pot which was broken, no one knew how—very unjustly, her suspicion fell on our heroine, and she not only was angry with her for her careless inattention, but for not owning it, or excusing her fault. In her wrath she had even slapped her hand. Augusta bore it all without a word, equally disdaining to deprecate the old lady's anger, as to extenuate it, by repeating her asseverations of knowing nothing about the fractured tea-pot. Some time after this, the real cause of the accident was discovered, and when Mrs. Rachael said she was sorry to have blamed Augusta without a cause, the little high spirited girl replied, "I trusted you would one day find out how little I deserved your reproofs ; I knew very soon how it must have happened." "And why did you not then tell me, that I might have recompensed you for my former suspicions?" "Because I knew you would be sufficiently punished for having ever suspected me, which was atonement enough." Even at that age, tender as it was, she blamed her own pride, but never could correct it in the moment wherein it led her into an error. In this recent instance, she most severely condemned herself, for being carried away by its impetuosity. She attempted her justification, by alleging, that on no out-

ward appearance could she have judged so harshly in the case of another, yet had the candour to allow, that there was sufficient grounds for believing her guilty of great indiscretion ; but knowing it was impossible that actual guilt could ever be an inmate of her bosom, she spurned the reproach, instead of clearing herself from it, by explaining the causes which led to the appearance ; and she yet drew some consolation from the hope of the time arriving, in some future period, when her innocence should be established ; and felt a little of the weakness of a woman, when she said to herself with a conscious glow, that spread from her heart to her features, “ Then how will his heart be pierced with remorse, and how nobly shall I be avenged for his cruelty ! ” The idea even added strength to her frame, and rising, she walked with some difficulty across the room. Finding some support necessary before she could get back to her chair, she rested her arms on a bureau which stood between the windows, when her eyes were caught by the miniature which had continued to lay there the whole time of her illness. The resemblance to herself struck her exceedingly, but how it could be procured, when she had never set for her picture in her life, struck her still more powerfully. “ Alas ! ” said she, mournfully surveying it, “ How is it possible it could be obtained ? Is my fate ever to be involved in mystery ? And could the wretch tell his son—his too much deceived son, that I had given it to him. Oh, how many corroborating circumstances are combined to destroy my fame, while, like poor Arbaces, I can only say, I am innocent ! Fatal resemblance of the wretched Augusta, would she was as insensible as thee ! but her unparalleled misfor-

tunes bleed in her heart, nor will they cease, while that continues to vibrate."

Louisa Wyndham entered her chamber with some news-papers; "you must not be allowed to read much at a time, you know, my dear Miss Monckley, but perhaps some of these paragraphs may amuse you." To get rid of her own perplexing reflections, and to shew her thankfulness of the little girl's desire to divert her, she cast her eyes over them, with a mind too much disturbed, to be able to attend to what they contained. She was going to lay them aside, as Louisa had just tripped down stairs, but the name of Glamore caught her eye; she snatched the paper, and this paragraph fixed her deepest attention. "We are sorry to acquaint our readers, that the Earl of Glamore lies dangerously ill at his house in Portland-Place." She remained some minutes with her eyes rivetted to the paper. When the idea of his dying without doing justice to her character chilled her viens; and then the hope that he would repent of his vile intentions, and confess all his stratagems, made every artery tingle with increased circulation. Again she sunk into despondence, that he knew not the interest his son had in her being vindicated, therefore the chance was much against his voluntarily exposing the baseness of his heart, though his diabolical schemes had been frustrated; "yet who knows," she cried with more confidence, "perhaps the mercy of heaven has thrown this information in my way, that I should be encouraged to make a trial on his hard heart, and on his bed of sickness aid his penitence, by urging a disclosure of this dark deed! It must be so—and I will write to him; on my knees I will implore him, by all

his future hopes, to do justice to my fame, and disperse those clouds which over-shadow its innocence. No time should be lost, and it is fortunate too, that Mrs. Wyndham takes the children out to dinner. I shall have some hours to myself to arrange my distracted thoughts, and time enough to send my letter (oh, propitious may it be!) to the post for this evening."

With much difficulty did the poor exhausted Augusta pen the following letter.

To the Earl of Glamore.

Just risen from the bed of sickness, and writing on her bended knees, does the wretched and unhappy Augusta Monckley implore justice and restitution from Lord Glamore. How has that unfortunate orphan excited the malevolence, which, under the specious pretext of love, you have heaped upon her? I find you are, or have been, dangerously ill. Oh then, may I hope that the threatenings of dissolution may have awakened remorse in your heart, and will, at my earnest supplication, be induced to restore my lost fame. You, and you alone, know how much I have been injured. In the depth of my sorrow, for all the friends the first misfortunes had left me, and of whom inexorable death had deprived me—you sought insidiously to ensnare me to my ruin. That base scheme being frustrated by the principles of virtue, my more than parent had instilled into my mind; you then, under the false pretence of sheltering me beneath a mother's roof, seduced me to the most infamous of houses. Providence still guarded my innocence from your ma-

chinations, and I escaped with my honour unstained. But to prove the blackness of your heart, and deep inexpressible revenge for my just scorn of your baseness, you have cruelly and most unmanly tainted my fair name. Oh, let me speak in daggers to your bosom, for you have pierced mine with the barbed arrow of affliction. Twice have I almost visited the gates of death, and daily have called on his name to end my unheard of calamities. Yes, let me speak daggers to your bosom, that my piercing words may awaken a sense of my injuries, and prompt you to do me justice ; then may the gates of heaven (in its own time) be opened to receive you. But think, if the lost Augusta should not be redressed, if she should in the last day call on Lord Glamore as her destroyer, how great will be his condemnation ?

A word from you will repair my injuries. Relate how that vile Spencer was informed of those circumstances which led to my belief of her being my mother ; clear my character from the odium of having been infamously connected with you ; and above all, clear that inexplicable circumstance of your having my picture in your possession ; never did I set for one in my life. How you could obtain a resemblance is mysterious ; but I adjure, oh, by that power to whom you must answer, I adjure you to assert my innocence ; neither can I live nor die in peace, while my name is mentioned with undeserved reproach, and branded with infamy. If ever you hope for heaven, oh let me beseech you to send me a letter, which may publicly and effectually cleanse me from the foulest imputations, and which you know I am as free from in person as in mind. I know not what I have written ; my head is

distracted, my heart breaking, and my wretched life near its end. But save, oh save yourself from the horror of my holding up my hand against you, when the day of reckoning comes, and when no subterfuge will, nor can, save you from an avenging God.

I am at Mrs. Wyndham's, Kidwelly, South-Wales. Oh let not an unhappy orphan beseech her oppressor in vain ; but do justice, speedy justice, to the murdered fame of the lost and unhappy

Augusta Monckley.

Worne down by the severity of her grief, and ill health, Augusta could scarce keep herself from fainting during the time of writing her mournful and distracted letter. She threw herself, nearly exhausted by fatigue, on her bed for some time, before she could address it, and give it to a servant to put in the post. How fervent were her prayers to heaven, that it might not be too late, and that in mercy to her sufferings, that heaven would inspire Lord Glamore with penitential sorrow for the afflictions he had so cruelly brought upon her, and dispose his heart to make her all the reparation in his power. She no longer deceived herself ; it was not the opinion of the world which she wished to obtain ; she should never mix in its societies, therefore to that she should continue unknown ; but it was the son of the basest of men, whom her soul languished to have undeceived. On that one point all her hopes were fixed ; not that she wished ever to see him again, but that he should think well of her, and still, that she might live in his esteem.

Happy was it for her, that she had escaped the knowledge of the death of Lord Glamore, by his duel

with Sir Charles B——. The mercy of heaven is great in keeping some things a secret from us. The hope that cheered her heart, of having this vile stigma removed from her character, contributed to the amendment of her health, which gave her strength to bear some more severe trials of her sensibility. Youth is the period of sanguine expectation, and although reflection had meliorated her's, and matured her reason beyond her age and inexperience, yet hope sustained her, and led her on to believe she should see an end soon to those ills that preyed on her existence. She looked forward to no other establishment in life, than to constantly reside with her dear and amiable Mrs. Wyndham, in a calm and uniform tenor. Like the clear rivulet, unruffled or vexed by adverse winds, gliding smoothly along, and on its peaceful bosom reflecting the face of heaven.

Moderate in her wishes, and all her hopes concentrated to that one point of having her fame cleared to the son of Lord Glamore, she flattered herself she should live a life of ease, and compounded, with great resignation, for no other chance of happiness.

The next day Sir Maurice, who had not seen her since her indisposition, had the happiness of being introduced to her in his Mrs. Wyndham's dressing-room. His spirits were so overpowered on seeing the ravages which sickness had made in her lovely face, that it was with visible emotion he congratulated her on her appearance of recovery. The faded lustre of her charming eyes, her pallied cheek, and tottering step, pierced his heart with grief, and knowing too that it proceeded from some secret consuming sorrow, increased his concern for the sufferings of this amiable

girl, for Mrs. Wyndham had frankly confided to him all her suspicions and conjectures. Sir Maurice Morgan's heart was truly estimable. He still loved Augusta with the tenderest affection ; but strictly adhered to his noble resolution of never distressing her by speaking of it ; and although he believed it to be impossible ever to feel those sentiments for another, which he had long cherished towards her, yet suppressed, as much as possible, the effects of his passion, lest they should augment those distressing feelings he saw her labour under, and would have parted with almost his life to remove.

She saw, with gratitude, mixed with pity and affliction, the conflicts which were so difficult to be subdued. She addressed him with the utmost gentleness, and sweetly said, " She thought the time long since she had enjoyed the pleasing society of one who was esteemed by her as a brother, and who she should ever love as a valuable friend."

" My sweetest sister, then," said he, taking her hand, " you will allow me the privilege of so tender and near a relation, to prescribe air and gentle exercise for you. I am still too much of an invalid myself to ride on horseback, because I cannot yet bear my boots : but will you not suffer me in a day or two, to have the happiness of driving you in my phaeton ? I am certain it will be beneficial to you, and, if I am not so blest as to form any share in your felicity," he continued, in a softened and irresolute tone, " let me at least contribute to your health."

" As soon as my kind and friendly Doctor Watkins gives me liberty, I will most willingly accept my brother's offer," she answered. " There is but one sad

thought, and one hope now remaining in my bosom, and, if heaven favours me in that, I shall sit myself down thus, between my inestimable friend and my brother, contented for the remainder of my life. I said but one hope; I was selfish in that unguarded speech. Yes, Sir Maurice, I have another: I do most sincerely hope and pray, that you will soon meet with an amiable companion, blessed with those virtues which adorn your own bosom, our little party will then be complete."

"Never, never!" cried he, with warmth, "do not, my ever beloved sister," he added, with a sigh, "do not require so cruel a sacrifice from me! You have declared your resolution of continuing in a single state; why may I not form the same? At least, suffer me to remain so till my heart can behold your counterpart, and then I believe I shall never marry. I will never urge the least complaint to distress you: but injure not the purest and tenderest affection, by supposing it can be superseded by any other."

"I certainly did not wish to recommend an union to my brother," replied Augusta, "that should not meet his tenderest wishes: but I judge from his good sense and conduct, that he will not suffer a weak attachment to overpower his reason, and render him blind to the attractions of beauty and worth."

"Come," said Mrs. Wyndham, laughing, "I will not have any infraction of treaties: we are all friends and relations, and are bound to bear each other's infirmities with pity and patience. My dear Maurice, you shall read this new Poem to us. We want something to enliven our fancies, for, notwithstanding we are very good kind of folks, a little lurking selfishness

will engage our attentions, and we shall fall into the *penserosa*, when it is much better we should be *allegro*, or *andante* at least. To-morrow, Augusta will be able to go out in the air, and perhaps bear one turn on the Terrace, which will prepare her for the gentle exercise you prescribe, and which, I doubt not, will be efficacious towards the regaining her strength and health, and then, as she says, I hope, we shall have nothing further to wish for: but if any happy prospects should arise, meet them with glad surprise and thankfulness. We cannot pass through life without trials. I believe we each may, from our own experience, subscribe to that truth. When they have been well supported, they are half combatted; and when we can gain a conquest over ourselves, we feel a conscious triumph that blunts the edge of affliction, and deadens the memory of it."

"Oh!" cried Augusta to herself, "when shall I feel that conscious triumph? Alas! my heart too keenly feels its sorrows, and bleeding memory is too faithful a recorder." She stifled the sigh which rose involuntarily from her pained recollections, and, with a gentle smile, told Sir Maurice they would be all attention to him while he favoured them with the village curate. He found it a less difficult task to read, than to regulate his own thoughts for discourse, and the sweet flowing verse of that elegant poem harmonized all their feelings, and engaged every attention to those charming descriptions of the curate's family.

Though the mind of Augusta was extremely harassed by doubts and fears, on the consequence of her letter to Lord Glamore, yet hope came to her aid,

and inspired her with the belief that heaven would not forsake her, and leave her wretched for life. As usual she counted the hours that must elapse, and the tedious days before her letter could be received, and the length of time ere she could get an answer. She anticipated the information that would be sent her. Perhaps the son might write ; the father might be too weak. Then the sad thought would arise that she had been too late in her application, and his death might still leave her character in doubt. All these perplexing reflections retarded the recovery of her health by preying secretly on her spirits. The tender and unremitted attentions of Mrs. Wyndham and Sir Maurice, who was now their daily visitor, contributed to give some employment to her thoughts while they were with her ; but a moment's pause, in conversation, forced her ideas back to their source, and almost the whole of each night found her ruminating, hoping, and fearing. The season of the year which was autumn was uncommonly fine, though it was quite the latter end of October. The two or three first airings Augusta had taken, were only driving a few times round the paddock ; but as her strength increased, Sir Maurice wished to vary her amusements, and one morning was driving her towards Carmarthen, near which place was to be that day a poney race. They saw a number of carriages and horsemen on the road going to the race ground. A gentleman was passing them, and looking at the phaeton discovered to Augusta's view the face of Sir William Forbes.

He instantly recognized our heroine, and bowing familiarly, cried out—" Oh, Miss Monckley ! I am

happy to see you so well engaged. Faith, you are fortune's favourite! Well, your old friend Lord Glamore died like a hero at last." He galloped on, unconscious, and disregarding the effect which his speech had on his auditors. Augusta had been sufficiently shocked on finding herself recollected by one of the visitors of the infamous Spencer; but to be told Lord Glamore was dead, and had refused to do justice to her character, (for so she interpreted the expression dying like a hero,) benumbed every faculty. She sunk, half fainting back in the phaeton.

"Good God! my dear Miss Monckley, what did that man say? How you are affected! What can I do for you? Have you not some salts in your pocket?" and stopping the carriage, called to one of the servants to get some water from a house just by. "Oh! speak to me," cried he, to Augusta, who was almost senseless: "Shall I take you into that house? I will mount one of the horses, and follow the wretch, whose rude address has thrown you into such terror."

"Oh! not for worlds," exclaimed Augusta, faintly, yet with vehemence, and catching his hand. "The last hope has failed the undone Augusta, and I am lost for ever!" she added, the tears gushing from her eyes: "I submit to my cruel fate, and only wish that heaven would this moment end my misfortunes with my life."

Sir Maurice was almost frantic, on beholding her grief and look of settled despair. He forced her to take some drops, and likewise so strongly entreated her to go into the house, that she, feeling the principles of life receding fast, and fervently hoping that the hand of death had seized her, made no ob-

jection to his earnest solicitations, and submitted to be carried into a room, and laid on a bed. One of the men was dispatched instantly to Wyndham-Place, to say that the exercise of the phæton was too violent for Miss Monckley, and Sir Maurice begged his aunt to send the coach to convey her home, as she had had a fainting fit.

As to Sir Maurice himself he neither knew what to think, or how to act. Most gladly would he have followed this strange man, and learn from him what he meant by his oddness to Augusta; but the agony with which she uttered, 'Not for worlds!' prevented him on one side; nor could he quit her in so precarious a situation, for his fears almost made him credit her assurances, that she should die soon. His other servant he had sent to Dr. Watkins, whose advice he thought highly necessary. Happily both these kind assistants arrived at the same moment, to the great comfort of Sir Maurice, who was almost distracted by the agitation of his mind. He perfectly had heard, and recollected every word; nor was the familiar air with which they were spoken lost upon him. The man could not be mistaken, because he called her by her name, and likewise the instantaneous effect it had on Augusta, proved her pre-acquaintance with him. How could she be so much interested in the death of Lord Glamore, as to exclaim, 'then her last hope was lost?' What could that hope be? While Dr. Watkins visited his patient, Sir Maurice related every circumstance to Mrs. Wyndham, begging her to aid his conjectures with her own. She was unable to form any that were conclusive; but now declared, she would endeavour to prevail on

Augusta to disclose that secret grief, that pining sorrow, that had preyed on her heart, and which, perhaps, but from a too scrupulous delicacy on her own part, she might have obtained before, and by participating, enabled the amiable girl to have sustained her misfortunes with more fortitude and confidence. The tender assiduities of her friends, with the medical assistance of Dr. Watkins, restored the lovely Augusta to such a state, as would allow of her removal to Wyndham-Place in the evening. They were apprehensive of a relapse of her fever, which the physician pronounced would be fatal, and that she must, by some means be roused from the torpid and consuming melancholy that set heavy on her heart, and deranged her reason. He knew the softness and delicacy of Mrs. Wyndham, and he was so firmly the friend and well-wisher of our heroine, that Mrs. Wyndham had scrupled not to tell him every circumstance that Sir Maurice had related to her.

“She is so perfectly amiable,” said he, “that no doubt can ever arise of her having acted contrary to the rule of virtue and innocence, and yet she may have been surprised into indiscretion. You know nothing of her history; but I am convinced, my dear Madam, if she candidly owns that she has, at any period of her life, been the victim of artifice, you will never forsake her. While her mind was disturbed, when I was first called in this morning, she raved on the name of Lord Glamore; said ‘he had ruined her peace of mind, and had gone to his dreadful account without making her restitution;’ talked of a letter she had written. Do inquire among the servants if she has written to any one.” They did so, and found

she had sent a letter to the post on the day Mrs. Wyndham dined at Sir Walter Pentrin's, directed for the Earl of Glamore.

“ I know,” added the Doctor, “ the late Earl bore an extreme bad character, and was the ruin of many innocent girls. This lovely one may have been seduced by him. You have heard she was left unprotected, and he had a seat in the neighbourhood where she lived : however, my dear Madam, I may rest her safety with you ; but I will say this, if you should be tempted on account of your daughters, to part with Miss Monckley, my house, my fortune, and protection, shall equally be at her command, and she shall live with me as my daughter.”

“ You are very good, my dear Dr. Watkins ; but, partially so, I will not let you harbour an injurious suspicion of such outrageous and unamiable virtue in me, even if this dear girl should have been led into a violation of it. Her heart is most excellent, and if she has been guilty of deviation from a path, in which the most cautious may stumble, I will uphold her wandering footsteps. You may be her friend ; but no house, or protection, shall Augusta Monckley ever want, while Caroline Wyndham can open her arms to receive her. How, or why should I love her so much, but from her amiable qualities ? Yes, let what may have been her fate, she is still in possession of more virtues than falls to the ordinary share of her sex.”

“ Charming woman !” cried the Doctor, taking the hand of Mrs. Wyndham, “ why, I shall be quite in love with you myself ! Well, then, I may safely

repose my sweet Augusta to your sheltering roof and affection. I hope she will soon recover these repeated shocks of her delicate constitution, and, by confiding her griefs to your bosom, lose the greatest weight of them by a friendly communication.

Sir Maurice did not attend the party home. His mind was embittered by the speech of the person who had addressed Miss Monckley on the road, and instead of returning either to Kidwelly or his own house, he drove on to Carmarthen, and after some difficulty, found this gentleman was with a party at one of the principal inns in that city. On inquiry, there were several of his acquaintance who had dined together. Sir Walter Pentrin, one of the company, pressed Sir Maurice to join them.

The stranger in a moment caught his eye. "I think, Sir," said he, "I have had the honour of seeing you before to-day. Did you not pass a phaeton, and speak to Lady whom I was driving?"

"I certainly did, Sir."

"Will you then favour me with your name?"

"Aye," cried Sir Walter, "I will introduce my friend Sir William Forbes, to my neighbour Sir Maurice Morgan."

"I should then esteem it as a particular favour in Sir William Forbes," said Sir Maurice, "if he would give me the pleasure of his company in another room."

"Why in another room?" cried Sir Walter; "we are all friends here. No, let us have another bottle in this room; it will be an improvement of the bill," laughing at the quibble on the word.

"I shall have no objection to the bottle," replied

Sir Maurice ; “ but the point I mean to discuss, as it relates to a lady, I shall chuse to have in a separate apartment.”

“ Oh ! we will drink her health in a bumper,” cried Sir Walter, who had apparently, as well as the rest of the company, had enough of the juice of the grape. “ Come, Maurice, my boy, give us her name ; I am charged already.”

“ Excuse me, Sir Walter ; the name of the lady in question is not to be sported with,” and he glanced his eye indignantly at Sir William Forbes.

“ Oh ! by G—d, but it may,” returned he, “ and she may be sported with too. I know her very well, and a devilish fine girl she is ; and here is her health with all my heart ; and I am glad to my soul she is under the protection of so gallant a fellow as Sir Maurice Morgan.”

“ Yes, Sir,” cried he, rising with agitation, “ and I will protect her ; with my life protect her. Your rude address to her this morning, may have the most alarming consequences. I ask you now, by what right you spoke to her with that familiar air ?”

“ Oh, be cool ! for God’s sake be cool,” cried one of the company, “ let us have no quarrels about girls. Faith, Sir Maurice, you should not have come hither to disturb our harmony.”

“ I am sorry to do so,” replied he, “ and for that reason wished to have spoken to that gentleman in another room.” And turning again to Sir William, “ Will you still favour me with your company ?”

He rose and said, “ Oh with all my heart.”

“ Sir Walter, will you attend us ?” Sir Maurice

asked. He had no objection, and a bottle and glasses were carried into an adjoining room. As soon as the gentlemen were seated, Sir Maurice, with more temper proposed the same question, 'What he, Sir William meant, by his extraordinary address?'

"I meant nothing, but that I was pleased to find she had managed so well for herself since she had left London."

"I do not believe that lady ever was in London."

"Waving the doubt," cried Sir William, "pray is not her name Monckley?"

"I never knew her by any other," answered Sir Maurice.

"Why then, I know that Augusta Monckley was in keeping with the late Lord Glamore; that she was one of the nymphs of King's-Place. I have been with her there frequently; and a damned lovely girl she is."

"It is impossible!" cried Sir Maurice, "you are, and must allow yourself to be mistaken. I never can believe a woman, such as you have dared to describe this lady, would have refused the honourable addresses of a Baronet of large estate in this country, I am so thoroughly convinced of her virtue and purity, that I would marry her to-morrow morning."

"And perhaps by to-morrow night you might find her more perfect in the lesson you might wish to teach her, than you would like to find your bride."

"Sir," cried Sir Maurice, fiercely, "this must be unsaid."

"Not by me," returned the other, haughtily, "though all the Don Quixottes of your principality were to put on the same big looks as yourself."

Sir Walter interposed, but the spirit of wine had seized Sir William's head, and the irascible spirit of a Welchman had fired Sir Maurice.

"You persist then in your abuse of this lady?"

"I abuse her? no; faith I should be as glad to be happy in her arms as many have."

"Either make good your assertions, or be assured, most dearly shall you repay this calumny."

There passions now rose to too high a pitch to be allayed by the meditation of Sir Walter, and in five minutes every thing was adjusted. Sir Maurice took a pistol, in the fullest confidence that the lovely Augusta had been traduced; and Sir William opposed his, very indifferent as to the issue. The fire of Sir Maurice brought his opponent to the ground; himself escaped untouched. A surgeon was sent for, who examined the wound, and being one of those, who make a great deal from a small foundation, very scientifically pronounced, if the ball had gone the eighth of an inch further on the diaphragm, the poor gentleman must have died instantly, but that he might now have time to settle his worldly account.

Sir Maurice had more dependance on the opinion of Doctor Watkins, who in his early part of life had been an army surgeon, begged he might be sent for. He wanted too to hear how Augusta was, and he chose to surrender himself to a magistrate, till the event of this affair should be known.

A messenger was immediately dispatched to the Doctor. On his arrival, "I think," said he, "between folly and wickedness, I have pretty full employment. What a precious method have you discovered to prove the innocence of that dear girl at Wyndham Place!

and how effectually must it establish her health, to hear that you have shot a man, and are in a fair way to be hanged ! amongst all my practice, I have found it the most difficult to make seven and twenty act like seventy. But let us see the dying gladiator."

"I hope you will not find the situation of Sir William Forbes so dangerous as has been represented to you." "I believe you—I believe you, young man, for if he should die, it would tell but ill in court, that you had broken in upon a convivial party, and forced one of them to defend himself against your unprovoked challenge. Oh, this Welch blood of your's wants a little cooling; but have you not prepared for your escape?"

"Oh, I do not think of so dishonourable a proceeding."

"So then you will honourably stay and suffer the law?"

"I care not what happens—only satisfy me that my dear Miss Monckley is better. I could not support her being publicly traduced. If I had fifty lives, I would risk, and even lose them all in defence of her virtue.

"You are a noble fellow, Sir Maurice, and I wish she had a heart to reward you; I am convinced she wishes so herself, but I fear a lurking inclination somewhere else, prevents her gratitude ripening into affection. I hope I have left her better. But come, let me visit the victim of your wrath, and of the injured character of that lovely girl." Sir Maurice mentioned the report of the surgeon, naming him, who had first examined Sir William Forbes, and the declaration he had made, that the eighth of an inch

would instantly have killed him." "Oh, he!" cried the doctor, "he does not know the difference between the *diaphragm* and the *pia mater*, I dare say, or could tell where either of them are situated in the human frame." Having thus shewn his absolute contempt of his colleague, he was led to the wounded man, and was soon convinced of the folly and ignorance of this empiric, who wished to make a job of what was very trifling in its consequences. However, Doctor Watkins thought there would be no harm in frightening Sir William a little, by way of punishment, for his traducing the character of his young favourite, and accordingly, shook his head, and muttered some unintelligible sentences to himself, proposing to Sir Walter Penhrin, that the friends of the gentleman should be sent for, and hinting, as this affair would probably come to a trial, that depositions should be taken in writing; adding to the wounded Baronet, "I hope, Sir William, you are convinced in your hazardous situation, that truth, and not prejudice, should dictate all you say."

"Most certainly it shall," he said, "I am heartily sorry for what I said of Miss Monckley, and am of opinion, that I was much to blame; for I own my expressions might lead Sir Maurice Morgan to believe, that I had shared her favours. I asserted she was kept by Lord Glamore; in that I went too far. It is true I was often in her company in King's-place, but her conduct there was that of purity itself. She knew not what kind of a house she had been betrayed into, for it was a vile plot of his Lordship's, and the mistress of the house. She told us the young lady was an orphan, who had lost her parents by some dreadful

accident ; that Lord Glamore had tried various ways of seducing her, but failing in all his attempts, had with her laid a plan, to make the poor young thing believe she had discovered her family, and Mrs. S—— was to pass for her mother, but I believe, most happily for her, she escaped from them before the last point had been carried. I condemn myself severely for having attacked her so rudely on the road, because it was then, and is now my firm belief, that she is truly virtuous." Doctor Watkins proved he had a little Welch blood in his veins, for he could not help execrating Sir William most bitterly, for his unmanly conduct. "Indeed," said he, "I most heartily and sincerely repent of it, and entreat the pardon of Miss Monckley for my unguarded behaviour. I freely forgive Sir Maurice, and honour him for his noble spirit, in defending her character."

"I am glad to find you so sensible of your errors, and as I can do you no farther service, I would wish you to prepare for a good night's sleep, I see nothing to prevent it."

"Good God ! am I not then in danger of death ?"

"I should wish you to be so from my soul, if I thought you would ever retract what you have said."

"No, that I will not by heavens !"

"Well, then, I will assure you, you are not in the least danger from this affair ; a man might live to an hundred, with ten bullets in that direction. Keep yourself quiet, and in a day or two you will be on your legs again. Let this be a warning to you ; never, at least in Wales, make an attack on the reputation of a beautiful and virtuous young woman. You will find the meanest Welchman ready to draw

a trigger against a vile traducer of injured innocence."

This information was doubly agreeable to Sir Maurice, who though a spirited young man, yet had forcibly felt the horror of destroying a fellow-creature; one who might have been deceived by appearance of error, but that reflection came too late. He continued to remain at the inn, till the situation of Sir William Forbes was decided, which the doctor doubted not would appear clearly to every man of medical skill the next morning.

CHAP. XXVI.

MUTUAL CONFIDENCE.

DOCTOR WATKINS was early in his visit to Wyndham-place, for fear the news of the *rencontre* should have reached it with exaggerated circumstances, which might be particularly prejudicial to our heroine, in her languid state. He found her much recovered, and with very little appearance of fever, though she was at his request in bed.

"My charming Miss Monckley, I most sincerely congratulate you on this amendment in your looks."

"Ah! my good doctor," said she, shaking her head, "my looks are deceitful if they tell you I am better. I feel, alas! I never can be so. How much am I indebted to the kind attentions of all my friends, and

their good wishes; but I have that within, that baffles all their efforts; nothing can remove it. Do not think me ungrateful, but the happiest and most welcome information you could give me, would be to tell me I could not live another day."

"Pooh! pooh! none of these dolorous doings, my sweet young friend, I shall scold you out of them. Come, you have met with some trials that have only served to set off your amiable virtues. Gold is tried in the fire, before it is known to be sterling, and then its value is fixed to eternity. What, because a ridiculous fellow has dared to utter some sarcasms, is virtue to be scared and terrified to death; sarcasms that he has retracted, and dearly paid for." "Oh, my dear doctor; what do you mean?" cried Augusta, raising herself up in her bed. "Keep yourself quiet, my dear child, and I will tell you the whole. Don't alarm yourself, nor you neither, my dear Mrs. Wyndham; all is safe, and I hope to present your hero to you this evening. You know the spirit of our Maurice, for I must put in my claim to that noble fellow." "Oh! no prefacing for God's sake," said Augusta, "keep me not in this agony of suspense—what has happened?"

"A slight affair; nothing to speak of. Sir Maurice insisted on making Sir William Forbes explain what he meant; they were both warm; one in a right, the other in a wrong cause; but as it should always be, the right man was victorious, and after a little of his black blood being let out, he acknowledged, before Sir Walter Penrhin and myself, that you had been most basely injured by the infamous Lord Glamore, and that he himself had vilified your virtue, which he

believed immaculate. And now, my dear Miss Monckley, as a relief to your mind, confide all its troubles and difficulties to this excellent friend of your's. In her sympathizing heart, so congenial to your own, you will feel yourself relieved and strengthened by your communications. Make haste to get well, my lovely patient, and defy all your enemies ; for they are the enemies of virtue, innocence, and beauty. I will now go to Carmarthen to see Sir Maurice."

" Sir Maurice ! is he then at Carmarthen ? he too is wounded ?"

" His honour would, in his opinion, had he quitted the spot where Sir William Forbes lay ; but I doubt not I shall see the latter on his legs again, and I hope a better man than he has been. But Sir Maurice is impatient to know how you are ; and do not let any refined notions creep into your head, to retard your recovery ; the affair has ended very well, and if I had been in the place of my brave Baronet, I would have drawn a trigger, too in your service." Away the friendly old man tripped.

" Oh, my dearest Mrs. Wyndham !" said Augusta, taking her hand, and bathing it with tears, " what trouble have I brought on your house, and how severely taxed your protection of an helpless orphan !"

" My beloved Augusta," answered that amiable woman, " let us both rejoice in our acquaintance of each other. I shall love my nephew better than ever, for this instance of the noble spirit of his heart, in defending your character from foul aspersion ; for such I am convinced it must have been."

" Will you open your bosom to me ; tell me all this hoard of grief which has cost me a great portion !"

“ Oh, most willingly ; and often have I wished to repay your unexampled kindness by my grateful confidence ; but so many things required arranging, and then she added, blushing deeply, “ I found that you all believed, that it was to the dear unfortunate Henry my weak heart was so deeply attached ; that not being able to tell you the whole, made me rather avoid a partial relation. I think I can sit up and begin my melancholy history.” “ No, my love, the posture you are in, will render it less fatiguing to you ; but yet I fear the recollection of the events which have saddened your life, will be too great an exertion at present ; I will suspend my curiosity till you have regained more strength.” “ Oh, no,” said Augusta, “ I feel so much better, even from the anticipation of the consoling sympathy of my dear friend, that I begin to think I deceived myself in believing my end approaching. Never since the death of my dear Mr. Monckley, have I had a friend in whom I could feel the enjoyment of an exchange of sentiments ; and never in my life, one of my own sex, whose mind was similar to my own. For perhaps to him, nor to any one, could I own the foolish partiality of my heart but to you, my beloved respected friend, whom I know possesses the tenderest, most indulgent mind. And yet my revered benefactor loved his hapless Augusta with the fondest affection, and had a bosom stored with the gentlest virtues.”

She began her little history from the period of her being adopted by Mr. Monckley, embellishing it with grateful eulogiums on that excellent man. The recollection brought streaming tears from her eyes, as she related the several instances of his goodness, and more

than paternal regard. Most succinctly did she explain the nature of her affection to Henry. "It could not be love I felt for him; alas, I know it could not," she said with a sigh. Every thing, as far as memory could suggest to her recollection, she enumerated; of their death, her grief, and the artful schemes of Lord Glamore, to get into her confidence by his specious generosity. The brutal Mr. Benjamin Monckley was not forgotten, nor his insolent friend Mr. Peter Popkins. All these circumstances she dilated on, involuntarily protracting, as much as possible, the subject of her first acquaintance with the son of Lord Glamore.

"But when shall we come to this lover?" asked Mrs. Wyndham. "You have stopped, and then returned to these horrid characters many times, I long to find some one with a mind more congenial with your own."

"Alas! no lover!" cried Augusta, sighing. "I have lost him for ever!" She then led to the incident of her meeting the amiable stranger at the beach, and having got into that part of her story, found herself agreeably impelled to pursue it. She had never indulged herself with thinking of him without some degree of blame, and never had had the opportunity of speaking of him; and those that know the secrets of the human heart, know how delightful it is to make the eulogium of a loved object. Her language always elegant, was refined when she described him, and repeated all he had said and looked. And she wondered how she could have found so copious a flow of words to express a circumstance that had not lasted half an hour.

But she was forced from this too fascinating sub-

ject, to relate other circumstances—of her removal from Malvern—her being strengthened in her wishes of making some enquiry after her family, by the repeated efforts of Lord Glamore to discover her retreat, and the assurances from her servant, that the late Mrs. Rachael Monckley had prevented some of those enquiries having their proposed effect. Of her having advertised; and then her astonishment was expressed how all her infant habiliments could have been so accurately described, as to leave her no doubt of Mrs. Spencer being her mother; and by which fatal belief, she had fallen into so dreadful a snare. She dilated on the whole of that woman's behaviour, which had given her so much dissatisfaction, and prevented her feeling that filial regard for her, she had hoped a parent would have inspired in her bosom, naturally affectionate. In short, she laid every agitation of her mind candidly before her friend—of all whom she had seen in that infamous house—the distress she had sustained at the play—her melancholy reflections on believing she had forfeited the esteem of this too-much loved stranger. Her mortification in being exposed to the company and conversation of the vile Lord Glamore, who, to mention without some disqualifying epithet, was impossible. The gala business. Her confirmation of being despised by the only person in the world she wished to think well of her. The next day, the rude attack from an old Duke, and her conviction she had been betrayed for the purpose of effecting her destruction. Her escape from the vile Spencer's. Her accident and fainting in the chair. Her journey to Bath, and the means to which she was obliged to apply for subsistence. Nor

was lady Mac. forgotten in the narrative, as it led to her happy meeting with Mr. Bendley, and in future to her blessed asylum with the amiable Mrs. Wyndham.

Now the cause of her severe illness came in turn; she related minutely all that had happened. The fatal interview with, as it proved, the son of the very man who had caused all her misery and misfortunes. The obtaining her picture was the most inexplicable mystery of all others, since in no part of her life had she had a resemblance taken; "and yet the cruel wretch told his son I had given it to him; and he still believes me guilty of a connexion with his abandoned father. You know, my dear madam, how very near the grave I have been, and how frequently I have wished for that sacred solitary asylum from all my woes! Never can I be happy—the mystery in which my origin is involved—and now I wish not to know any thing about it, (for till I do, I will most steadily resist every offer of marriage, even if I could conquer this fatal preference to Lord Malvern) but I trust I shall never be importuned. Never should I feel distress by any, but from that amiable nephew of your's. He deserves the whole heart of the most excellent of women. Mine is at best divided, and would only seal his wretchedness and my own, could I be induced to give him my hand. No, my beloved friend, let us not part, let it be my happy task to assist you in forming the minds of your dear children. Let us live and die together."

"And long and happy may we live, my ever dear and valuable Augusta! no, we will never part. My heart has been attached to you by a general sympathy

from the moment I first became acquainted with you ; and this sweet mournful relation has linked the chain of our amity still closer. No, my love, your heart is too firmly, though perhaps unhappily, enthralled, ever to be disengaged. I applaud your resolution of never entering into a matrimonial state. I believe I should have been much happier, at least my life would have passed with less poignant affliction, had I had your steadiness. An early attachment never can be effaced ; I have found it so, and my heart yet bleeds from the wound it first received. I will, my dear girl, repay your confidence," she added, hemming to get a clearer voice. " But you must be exhausted with your great fatigue. Take some beef tea, and a biscuit, and then try to get some sleep. I will sit with you after dinner, and tell you some griefs which have, for these twenty years and more, been nourished in my bosom, poisoning all my fair prospects, and blighting every hope that youth and love had formed. I will not enter on the subject, I could not break off, for like your's, they have all been confined to my own bosom."

She left our heroine immediately, to seek that repose so necessary to her, and which, having relieved her heart a great deal, by this communication of its secret sorrow, soon stole upon her weary eyelids. Mrs. Wyndham hearing her nephew was come, composed herself as well as she could, and prepared to meet with smiles, and almost rapture, the hero of her beloved Augusta.

Doctor Watkins, according to his prediction, had found Sir William Forbes in a very fair way of doing well, and on his representation to the magistrate, there appeared no reason to refuse bail to Sir Mau-

rice, to whom it would be more agreeable to be in his own house. Mrs. Wyndham quite flew into her nephew's arms, and he returned her embrace in the most affectionate manner.

"How is the charming Miss Monckley?" cried he.

"Charming indeed," answered Mrs. Wyndham.

"I have just left her, and hope she will get a little sleep to restore her wasted strength. She has opened her whole heart to me, and related every circumstance of her life, which I will, in a concise way, tell you."

When she had so done, Sir Maurice, with a sigh, declared now all his hopes were for ever over, and he would content himself to think only of her as a beloved sister, which proved too clearly that he had even, till that moment, neglected the task of subduing his affection for her. "I do not wish, nor will I see her at present," he added, "I know her lively gratitude will induce her to express her sentiments in a manner, that will render this necessary task still more difficult. Make my tenderest compliments to her. I will take my leave of you, my dear aunt. In a little time I shall be able to visit you again. I have lived too long in the most charming society, for how could I forget to love all that was amiable, while for ever in my sight? absence must aid my endeavours. Would to God she was united to the happy man of her choice, and that he loved her as I do; then to see her in a state of felicity, to see that lovely young creature permanently happy, would be a relief to my mind. But to behold her sinking under undeserved reproach, and struggling with a secret attachment, how is it possible to see all this without wishing to render her otherwise? and then a thousand tender thoughts arise

in the bosom, that increase my affection for her by adding pity to it."

Soon after dinner, Mrs. Wyndham received a message from Augusta, who was impatient to see her, and in return for her unrestrained confidence, to hear all the anxieties that had saddened the heart of her friend. It gave infinite pleasure to Mrs. Wyndham, to find our heroine so much recovered. She was seated in her arm chair, and rose when that lady entered the room.

"My dear girl," said Mrs. Wyndham, approaching her, "how happy this sight renders me!" Augusta fell on her neck, hardly able to express her feelings by words, and found herself pressed close to the bosom of her amiable friend. Mrs. Wyndham made the grateful girl reseat herself, and drew a chair by her.

"I trust, my love, you find yourself relieved by your communication this morning."

"Indeed, madam, I am much relieved; you have now the secret before you that had so long preyed upon my heart. I cannot repent of my confidence, for there was an inexpressible luxury in disclosing it to you; and let me confess, that I should soon have sunk under the sense of my misfortunes. To you, my dear madam, I owe the first alleviation of my sorrows. I have acquired new fortitude, new patience. I have a friend to whom I can complain, and should in this instance want gratitude, if I should refuse the consolations which you have offered me, of mixing my soul with yours, in the sweetest conversation. And will not my beloved Mrs. Wyndham seek the same comfort she has afforded me; and reap the same advantages

from disclosing griefs which corrode the heart from being confined to it alone?"

"Yes, my dear friend, most readily will I relate the incidents of my life, that have cast a damp over my heart, and for ever robbed me of those sweet enjoyments it was formed for—though the source of all my sorrows has been long exhausted, yet the remembrance remains strong in my bosom, and no circumstances or changes of situation, has obliterated the memory of those who were so dear to me.

"I must take up my history, even before I had a being. My father, Sir Rowland Morgan, was joined in the bands of strictest friendship with the Earl of Brandon. You may perhaps recollect, my dear, my declining going to the castle with you and my girls. The deep anguish I once felt there, and now, and for ever must feel here," she said, putting her hand to her heart, "prevented my attending you."

"Ah, my dearest Mrs. Wyndham, by how powerful a sympathy are our bosoms attached to each other," cried Augusta, "which I that day discovered. A portrait so like the object that is foolishly, and vainly too dear to my heart, was declared by the housekeeper to be drawn for him, whom you have too much loved and lamented, ever to be happy."

"No wonder, my love, that portrait should bear the resemblance of the son of Lord Glamore, for it was drawn for his mother's brother. Lady Glamore was the only sister of Lord Clinton. But let me proceed. The tenderest friendship subsisted between Lord Brandon and my father. They had together raised a regiment, in the year forty-five, to subdue the rebels of their sovereign, by whom they were distin-

guished as loyal subjects. Excited by their strong prejudices against the Catholic religion, their mutual regard became some time after more strengthened, by their uniting themselves to two young ladies, who though not relations, were equally attached, as the fondest sisters could be. They formed a society among themselves, and when each had children, hoped to perpetuate their affections in their offspring. While we were yet infants, we were accustomed to be much together, and it was the mutual wish and intention of our parents, that a marriage should take place between Lord Clinton and myself, when at a proper age. He was about a year older than me; I need not describe his person to you, since that portrait you saw, was his exact image. I cannot remember the time that he was not tenderly beloved by me. Nothing, from my early years, ever gave me pleasure, equal to being in his company; and from childhood I always supposed I never could, or ought to love any other; indeed I never did. He possessed all my affections to the last moment of his life, and will continue so to do, to the latest hour of mine. His conduct was at once respectful and tender. He was always my champion and my partner, in our little dances or games. He appeared to love me, but, alas! he had then seen but little of the world; or rather, he had not seen the woman who was destined to make a conquest of his heart, and deprive me of him for ever, and ultimately bring destruction on himself. Lady Anne Clinton, his sister, was a great deal from home. Her grandmother, Lady Anland, was extremely partial to her, and would scarcely ever have her from her house in Yorkshire. A tender friendship had

taken place between Lady Anne and a Miss Maria Stapylton, a beautiful girl, with whom she became acquainted, from residing with Lady Aucland. Lord Clinton used sometimes to visit his sister, who was then on the point of marriage with Lord Malvern, the son of the Earl of Glamore. His frequent absences arose from so amiable a cause, that of enjoying the society of a beloved sister, that it never gave me one moment's concern. About this time I had the misfortune to lose my dear father; my mother had been dead more than two years; and Lord Brandon, who was my guardian, and fully supplied the place of a father, took me to live with him and his Lady at Brandon Castle.

He was desirous of having our marriage solemnized, but Lord Clinton wished to visit the Continent before he settled at home, and domesticated himself as a married man. He was but just of age, and although my heart was entirely fixed on him alone, yet I was not averse to the measure, as I lived very happily with his family. Lady Anne married, and Miss Stapylton became almost a constant inmate of her ladyship's house; of course Lord Clinton was very much there whenever he was in town, and her beauty and elegance of manners stole into his heart, and made him forget his poor Caroline, whose greatest merit, perhaps, was her constant and ever-enduring attachment to him. I was still the object of his esteem, but, alas! Maria was the sole mistress of his heart. He struggled, indeed, against the fascinating charms that enslaved him; for he was convinced his father would never accede to an union between them, had not his honour been pledged that

a marriage should take place with me ; for her family were Catholics, and herself much attached to the persuasion in which she had been educated. His heart was torn with many conflicts. He was at last determined to sacrifice his love to his honour, and had forcibly broken from his brother-in-law's to come down to Brandon.

The tender and susceptible Maria, whose heart was mutually attached as his, fell into a deplorable illness, and Lady Glamore, knowing the cause, sent an express to her brother. He flew back again to London, and then the sight of her distress obliterated every other idea from his bosom, and he swore nothing should separate their destiny. He hoped he should even gain an advocate in me, and almost flattered himself I was not so much attached to him, that the sacrifice of giving him up would not cost me much. Alas ! he knew not how dear he was to me ; but to put even a retraction out of his power, he solemnized his nuptials with Maria Stapylton in the forms of each church, and then came down to Brandon Castle, and proposed again his excursion to the Continent.

Lord Brandon expressed his dissatisfaction in very severe terms. I attempted to meliorate them. Lord Clinton took advantage of my acquiescence with his request, and hinted that, perhaps, my wishes to protract our union might arise from a natural promptitude of the heart, which did not like to feel itself dictated to. Alas ! my wish had originated only from his. The natural delicacy of my feelings would not allow me to appear anxious for our union, when he himself was desirous of having it postponed. Lord Brandon, whose bosom was fraught with the highest sentiments

of honour, as well as parental affection for me, as the daughter of his dearest friend, loudly insisted on his son's performing his engagements, urging the indelicacy of a young woman waiting in his house till her affianced husband should be at leisure to offer his hand to her acceptance. My heart sunk within me during this altercation: it forewarned me that I had lost ground in the affections of Lord Clinton. This melancholy and restrained air filled my bosom with a thousand terrifying ideas; all comfort was banished from my heart, and sleep from my eyes: I besought Lord Brandon to consent to his son's wishes.

"You then love him not," cried he. "You seek to evade the dying injunction of your loved parent."

"Oh! not so," I answered. "Lord Clinton is dearer to me than my life; but he is yet very young, and it is natural for him to wish to see more of the world. Do not, I beseech you, thwart his inclinations: I am satisfied he loves me, and will, in a short time, be as anxious as your lordship to fulfil his engagements with me."

"If he is not, he is no son of mine." This menace was far from conciliating my peace, yet I endeavoured to appear calm, and even happy, while my bosom was inly torn with deep anguish. Lady Brandon was taken ill, and a few days closed that charming woman's life. This incident, though it gave a colour of excuse for delaying our marriage, yet made it equally improper for me to remain at Brandon Castle.

"My griefs," said Lord Brandon, "shall not interfere with your happiness. Your marriage shall be solemnized. Lord Clinton may travel with a wife in his suite. I will have no more delays."

Preparations were making for our nuptials. I saw chagrin and grief painted on the countenance of Lord Clinton. I wished to speak to him, but he seemed to avoid every opportunity of seeing me alone. My heart was bursting with sorrow, because it plainly saw that the object of my love would sacrifice himself to his duty. I little thought he had neither hand or heart to bestow upon me. One day I met him in the saloon: "My Lord," I cried, in a tremulous voice, "I must speak with you. You have long avoided all conversation; but the crisis of my fate is at hand, and my heart will burst with its own forebodings, if you do not allow it to give itself vent. Come into this room, and suffer me to ask you some questions." Even the little exertion which gave me strength to say this almost overcame me. The agitation of my mind was visible in my countenance.

"You are disordered and distressed, my dear Caroline," said Lord Clinton. "Had you not better take some other opportunity?"

"Oh, no!" I answered. "This one lost, no other may occur. I trust I have strength to go through my task, and I hope heaven will support me to bear it properly. I have struggled with restrained grief a length of time, but now I am determined to come to some explanation." He was obliged to follow me into the drawing-room, though when we arrived there, I knew not how to begin. There was something repugnant to female delicacy to reproach him for appearing backward in fulfilling his engagement to me.

I hesitated a great while. At last I said, in that kind of trembling voice, which, from an innocent and

ingenuous heart, is always the vehicle of sentiments foreign from truth, " Would it not be better intirely to give up the usurped authority of our parents, who decided our destiny without consulting our inclinations ?"

" Can my dearest Caroline wish their authority to be superseded ? Far would it be from me to bind her by the shackles of duty, if her inclination is adverse." The ready acquiescence to my supposed will confirmed all my fears, and dashed every hope to the ground. I could no longer act a part : nature came in for her share, and evinced her weakness, or rather triumph over art, by a flood of tears.

Lord Clinton appeared affected, and yet I will do him the justice to say, I believe he at that moment thought, as well as wished, that I had really no inclination for our marriage taking place. His conduct was affectionate, and would have consoled and quieted my heart, had I not persuaded myself that I was no longer loved by him.

" Shall you be happier," he cried, " if our engagement is entirely broken ? Only speak your wishes, and every thing shall be arranged to your satisfaction,"

" Not perhaps happier," I replied, a little more assured ; " but I shall see you so, and from that circumstance shall derive all my portion of content."

He looked consciously confused. I now assumed more courage. " My Lord," I cried, " I will never breathe a reproach towards you for the abatement of affection on your side. I believe you would comply with the wishes of your father, and bestow your hand on your destined wife ; but she has too much pride, and why should she conceal it ? Too much tender-

ness to accept it, without its being accompanied with your heart. This is my hour of trial, and I must go through with it. You have no heart to bestow upon me."

He took my hand, saying, "Why should you think so?" The unimpassioned manner of his speaking too evidently shewed the foundation of my assertion. "I ask not who has deprived me of it, and, perhaps, I never did possess it, yet, surely, once I thought I had, and repaid it with all my own." He interrupted me by a thousand protestations of his regard and esteem; his honour would not allow the word *love* to escape from his lips. My apprehensions were too quick to overlook this.

"I believe I possess a share of your esteem, because unconscious of any act of my life which could even hazard the forfeiture of it. Let me possess your confidence likewise. I resign all claim to your affections, and must endeavour to conquer my own, a much less painful task than to see your days embittered by uniting yourself with one you cannot love. Be candid, be ingenuous with me; but attempt not to deceive me to our mutual ruin and misery."

"My dearest Caroline," cried he, taking my hand again, "if sweetness, sense, and every female accomplishment, could fix the heart of man, where need he look farther than here? I feel the highest regard for you: I admire all your virtues, and, could I command my reason, to you alone should I have dedicated my heart; but something stronger than reason has seized on my senses! How shall I tell you?"

"Oh! no need of words," I said, rising up; "you have told me enough."

“And yet—I have yet told you nothing.”

“Have you not said your heart is engaged to another?—at least, is it not so implied? And can Lord Clinton think I would accept his vows at the altar while his affections are devoted elsewhere? No, the poor Caroline would resign her life with pleasure, ere she would consent to such an union. No, my Lord, you are from this moment free from any engagement to me.”

“Oh! leave me not, my dear Caroline, in anger; you know not how much I stand in need of your pity and advice.”

“Anger has no share in my feelings,” I answered; “nor will I be so selfish as to engross all pity to myself.”

“You wished to possess my confidence, Caroline, yet how can I bestow it, when the fatal disclosure will, perhaps, banish me these walls for ever? Oh! you know not the weight of woe, that has long borne upon my bosom, driving it almost to desperation. In one mad ungovernable moment I have done a deed that will, I fear, seal my everlasting ruin with my father; yet, believe me, my amiable Caroline, I feel infinitely more for the wrongs I have done to you.”

I gave him no interruption: I could not articulate a sentence, but waited with a stupid kind of speechless horror to hear what was the act he had committed, that would bring down ruin and destruction on himself, and never ending anguish upon me.

“Too fatally,” he added, “I knew not my danger till it became impossible to recede from it. Accustomed to love you from my boyish days, I fancied my heart invulnerable to any other attachment. Oh!

Caroline, dare I tell you, the society of Maria Stapylton proved I knew not its weakness. The fascinating beauty of her person stole insensibly into my bosom. It was a long time before I perceived and acknowledged her power. Do me the justice to credit my asseveration of combatting my unguarded passion with all my strength. I fled from her bewitching presence, determined to conquer or die in the attempt. How great, how painful, were my conflicts! I knew what I owed to honour and to Caroline, and laboured to divest my bosom of this fatal partiality to another, that I might give you my whole undivided affections which were so justly your due; that I might gain time, I urged Lord Brandon to allow me to visit the Continent, fully resolved to use every endeavour to recall my attachment from Maria, and devote myself unalienably to you. I strove to drive her idea from my heart, and every hour repeated your excellent qualities to strengthen the regard I had ever borne you: but, alas! all my good resolutions were upset. I received a letter from Lady Malvern that drove me on the verge, of madness. Maria, the unhappy Maria, was dying, and my sister loudly reproached me for being the cause of her death. To feel that I was beloved in so tender a degree by the woman I had so forcibly, yet ineffectually, strove to tear from my heart, filled me with transport, yet embittered by affliction. In a weak moment I gave myself up to a thousand delusive hopes, and hastened to Lord Malvern's. Oh! Caroline, cannot you guess the rest?"

I thought it incumbent now to speak. "Yes, you renounced Caroline; and vowed your hand to Maria."

"Alas! my dear Caroline, you yet know not the

extent of my perfidy to you; but I was not master of my reason. Can I hope for your forgiveness, and rely on your generosity? The fear of losing Maria for ever subdued every other consideration, and to secure myself from that torture, I made her irrevocably mine."

"Oh, my God! then you are married!" I exclaimed, with clasped hands, and in a tone expressive of the pang which seized upon my heart.

"Then I renounce him for ever!" cried out Lord Brandon, bursting into the room, with a voice and air the most terrific imaginable. The sight of him fixed me to the place where I stood. "Base wretch!" continued he, to his son, "Thou apostate to thy faith and thy God, quit this house now, and evermore, and may the heaviest vengeance of heaven pursue you with unremitted wrath. May the deepest curses on yourself, your hateful wife, and posterity, cling to your heart, and poison every hour of your life." Lord Clinton leaned on the back of a chair, hardly able to keep himself from falling. To say how I felt or looked is impossible.

"Cruel and treacherous Caroline," said his Lordship to me, "how have you betrayed me!" The idea he had formed of my baseness struck so forcibly on my wounded heart, that, adding to it all my own sufferings, I could no longer sustain my senses. He had but too much foundation for thinking me guilty of concealing his father, for the purpose of over-hearing our conversation. I sunk to the floor in a state of insensibility. I knew not what followed. On recovering myself, I saw none but mournful faces around me, and no one who was disposed to answer my

questions. I inquired for Lord Brandon. I asked where was Lord Clinton? The faces of the domestics were bathed in tears, and incapable of affording me any satisfaction. I would rise, and tottering down the stairs through excess of weakness, I could not be restrained from rushing into the library, where I heard Lord Brandon was. I found him walking about the room in great agitation.

On my entrance he flew to me, and pressed his arms round me, "Come, my dearest Caroline," cried he, "come to the heart of thy parent, for such I will ever be to thee, and help me to add the bitterest curses on the devoted head of that infamous apostate."

"Oh! not so, my ever revered friend," I said: "rather let me thus on my knees," and I sunk before him, "deprecate your anger against the unhappy Lord Clinton."

"Name him not," he exclaimed, his lips quivering with passion, "unless you will join in my execrations. You he has deeply injured."

"And yet I can forgive him, and trust I shall prevail on his once tender father, at least to remit his cruel anathemas. Oh! for the sake of heaven, reflect, my dearest Lord Brandon, how his heart is bowed down by the burthen of your curse. Do not exert so cruel a power over your only son. Alas! Alas! he thinks me guilty of a base contrivance to discover his secret marriage to you. Let him be undeceived. Acquaint him by what accident, unknown to me, you came into the next room. I cannot rest in peace, while my dear Clinton believes me capable of such barbarous treachery."

"Nothing can be too severe for such a wretch.

I will never recall my justifiable execrations on him. Has he not forfeited his oath, his obligations to you ? Has he not rendered my name odious, and forced me to violate my engagement to your dying father ? Has he not united himself to the enemy of his religion ? Yes, and he will apostatize his own ; then will be eternally undone he and his vile posterity."

" No, my Lord, I cannot think he will be ever induced to imbibe the religious principles of his wife. He has too much honour."

" Honour ! has he not falsified all pretences to honour ? Are you not the victim of his perfidy ?"

" Oh ! think not of me. My wrongs shall be all forgotten, if you will but deign to pardon him, or at least recall the dreadful curse which yet shrinks my heart with horror."

" Never !" cried he, with energy, " will I recall it, but to give it more strength ! This gentle forbearance in you is the more powerful reason for my punishing his act of disobedience. From my title and estate I cannot reprobate him ; but from my heart and forgiveness he is ever an alien. Seek not, Miss Morgan, to meliorate my mind ; it is unalterably fixed, and I abandon him for ever."

I knew the inflexibility of Lord Brandon's temper, and therefore feared I should do more injury to the cause of his son, if I attempted any further persuasion ; and his calling me Miss Morgan, instead of his dear Caroline, which was his usual mode of address, convinced me that it would be more prudent to acquiesce for the present in his cruel determination, than to hazard drawing his anger on myself, which would preclude all future hope of gaining a remission of his

heavy sentence against Lord Clinton : but that Lord Clinton should have left the house of his father, impressed with the idea of my having exposed him so treacherously, filled my heart with the keenest anguish. I was resolved to exonerate myself at any risk, and in a few lines, directed to him at the house of his brother-in-law, Lord Malvern, I intreated him to do me the justice of crediting my assertion of being wholly innocent, as well as ignorant, of Lord Brandon being at home at the time I engaged him in a conversation that had such fatal consequences ; and that, as I freely owned his happiness and welfare was dearer to me than any other circumstance in life, I begged him to rest assured, I would leave no means unemployed that might reinstate him in his father's bosom. I would not trust myself with entering into a detail of the unhappy affair that had made him an outcast, and my own situation the most distressing in the world.

In common with you, my dear Augusta, I had no bosom in whom I could repose my griefs, and was constrained to smother them within my own, that I might not increase the violence of Lord Brandon against his unhappy son ; and surely it was a severe addition to the disappointment of my earliest hope, to have given even a shadow of reason to the man whose good opinion I would have died to obtain, that I could be actuated by a base and mean passion of vengeance to betray him to his enraged father.

In a few days, however, that idea was removed. I received a letter from Lord Clinton : I took it from my cabinet that I might read it you. —

“ Dear, amiable Caroline,

“ Let me give what portion of comfort it is in my power to your excellent heart. Forgive me for having, even for a moment, injured you by my unjust suspicions. Cruel as my father is, he yet is just, and most nobly vindicated you from the appearance of collusion. To ask your forgiveness for the perfidy of my conduct to you, demand words I am unable to use. Was your heart like some of your sex, you would find consolation in knowing that the man, who has planted so much affliction in your bosom, is himself the most wretched of mortals ! But my gentle Caroline will feel an aggravation of her own sufferings from the knowledge of mine. Oh, how dreadful ! and how could I dare to incur a parent's curse ? It bears me down to the earth. Wretched Clinton, even thy posterity too, joined in the heavy anathema ! Yes, Caroline, I believe thy kind assurances, that all methods will be essayed to revoke the cruel sentence. I am this moment labouring under it ; an alien from my father's house—an alien to his affections—what a dower shall I bestow on my unhappy partner ! Why did I, in a fatal hour, forget all I owed to duty, to honour, and Caroline ? I have rendered a whole family miserable, and entailed on the unborn, wretchedness for their portion ! What a meeting ! I will spare the tender feelings of your heart ; nor will I harrow up my own soul by repeating it.

“ My father, consistent in his cruelty, had stopped all resources at his banker's. I could raise money upon my reversion of the estates ; but I will dig for my bread, and earn it by bodily labour, rather than

make use of such means to increase his animosity against me still farther.

“ Sir Thomas Stapylton refuses to his daughter any fortune, unless I can make her adequate settlement, which, without the concurrence of my father, is not in my power. Thus we are steeped in poverty, and loaded with execrations, yet, have I not deserved it all? Oh! too surely I have, and the conviction that this is but a portion of my curse, breeds a hell in my bosom. My dear sister is an object of my father's anger through my means, yet, though he does not send her his blessing, yet it is me and mine only he has cursed to all eternity. That amiable and beloved sister too is wretched. Her husband is unworthy of her. His extravagance leaves but little in her power to supply our present necessities. She has generously forced us to accept two hundred a-year, the half of her pin money, to support us abroad. We are going to Lisbon. There is a relation of my poor Maria's who has the means to assist us, and who is partial to her. I fear this step, though absolutely necessary, as we cannot subsist in England, will be construed by my cruel father to my disadvantage: but, I trust, my dear Caroline, you will endeavour to convince him, that no persuasion shall ever influence me to change my religion. At present such an assertion will have no weight with him, since he has received so recent a proof of my imbecility; but, though false to you, I will never forsake my God, or the faith in which I learnt to honour his name.

And now farewell, dear, much-esteemed, and injured Caroline; forget there was ever such a wretch in the world as myself. May your heart fix itself on

a more worthy object, and may the sorrows I have brought upon you be soon obliterated from your bosom. You deserve to be happy, and, with the most fervent prayers, I wish you so! All the wealth of the world, with all its pleasures, never can render me such a being, while bowed down to earth with a parent's curse."

How did I bathe this letter with tears that flowed from my wounded heart! To find him thus wretched, added to my own affliction. Could I but have seen, or heard, he was happy, would have afforded me some comfort; but I knew he never could be, while bending under so heavy a misfortune. I was told he had laid aside his title, as not suiting his present state, and having assumed some other name, to me unknown, I was prevented supplying him with a part of my own fortune, which, as I was now of age, I would otherwise have done. Oh! how little would such a sacrifice have cost me! But I had other trying conflicts. I wished to remove from Brandon Castle. Every object so powerfully presented to my afflicted heart what I had for ever lost, that the most inanimate thing that he had touched, or the walks where he had strayed, were beheld with a horror that sickened every nerve of my frame; and yet I trusted much on my influence over Lord Brandon, and therefore was unwilling to go to my brother, the father of Sir Maurice Morgan, because he lived at a great distance from the Castle. But Lord Brandon suggested the strongest idea of recompensing me for the affront, as he called it always, that had been put on me by his apostate son. Alas! it was not my pride, but

my love that was wounded, my affections, not my dignity.

"My dear Caroline," said he, one day, "you yet may be Lady Brandon."

"How is that possible?" I asked. "Could the marriage of your son be set aside, do you think I would ever consent to take his hand, when he has proved I never possessed his heart?"

"No," he answered, taking my hand; "he is undeserving you: but there is a way to sting that wretch to the soul. I offer myself to you." The look of astonishment I gave him stood in the place of words, for I could not find any to give expression to my feelings.

"You are surprised, my dear, no doubt. I am nearly thirty years older than you; but there have been more disproportionate marriages. You have said you would do any thing to prevail on me to remit the just curses I bestowed on Clinton. Consent to this noble vengeance on him, and you shall obtain your wish. I will never again see him; but you shall assure him, through the intercession of his mother-in-law, I wish him as happy as his disobedience and perfidy can make him."

"Oh, my God!" cried I, "what a price do you set on your hard-earned, and half blessing! You only mean to make trial of my patience."

"No, I swear to you, I am in earnest: I have always loved you from your infancy."

"Yes, so I am convinced," I returned, "but with the love which parents feel for their children; a filial regard I have ever borne you. Do not, for heaven's sake, make me reflect with horror on the idea of your

affection having any other foundation. You have terrified me, my Lord, with the bare suggestion."

"Remember, Caroline," he said, "that you have it in your power to avert my just wrath against my son."

"Indeed, indeed, I have not," I cried, trembling; "if my compliance with so wild a proposal is the only means, I have determined never to marry: and could I give my hand to my father? for in that light I have ever looked up to you. Oh! Lord Brandon, give respite to my torture, and tell me you are but jesting with me."

"If you had determined never to marry, it is plain no one has yet obtained a place in your heart, which Clinton so unworthily filled. Conquer then an idle prejudice. My affection has increased for you since you have been so constant an inmate of my house, and the idea has for some time occupied all my thoughts. There is nothing I will refuse to you. You shall regulate every action of my life, and dictate to my resentments; nay, no longer shall they have any force with me, if you will bless me with your hand."

With difficulty I got away from him, and never did I think till that moment I had had any acquaintance with sorrow. I strove to fortify my mind with the hope that he was still jesting with me; but too soon that vain comfort fled, and I was too fatally convinced that it had become the wish of his heart, and that his former parental regard was exchanged for a passion I looked on as little less than impious. To remain longer at the Castle was now impossible: I sought

refuge with my brother. Lord Brandon followed me thither, and I was exposed to fresh persecution from his having engaged Lady Morgan in his interest. My brother was ruled in every circumstance by his wife, and became one of the party. They strove to work upon my feelings every way. Had they asked me to resign my life to obtain Lord Brandon's forgiveness of his son, I would, with pleasure, have been led to the sacrifice; but to yield my hand to his father, to become his mother, was too severe a torture not to be resisted—yet in some moments how great was the conflict! I asked myself if I could answer it to my conscience, to perpetrate the curse, which I had vowed to meliorate, if possible? But the means of turning it to a blessing was so dreadful to myself, that my soul sickened with the idea, and revolted as it would have done from incest. Still persecuted from the joint perseverance of my relations and Lord Brandon, I knew not what course to take without alienating myself from my family, and setting them all at defiance, though it was my wish to remain single, I found that that privilege would not be allowed me. I had many offers, but my heart rejected them all. It could never love again; but yet, while I remained unmarried, I knew I should not be free from importunities, which were reflected on with horror on my part, and seemed likely never to end on the part of the others without filling their minds with animosity.

Mr. Wyndham, who had been my god-father, and was nearly as old as Lord Brandon, used to pity my situation, and told me half jestingly, that he would be my champion.

“Oh, that you would!” cried I, with earnestness.

If I was twenty years younger," said he, "I would run away with you myself."

"And if you was twenty years older," I replied, "I would gladly run away with you to avoid the distress I am daily and hourly exposed to. You know my sentiments, and know a heart wounded as mine has been, can never love; but it would feel duty, respect and gratitude to the person who should extricate me from so perplexed a situation." He took me at my word, and we were shortly married. By this step, I freed myself from any further persecution from Lord Brandon; but I was no less unhappy. Never could I banish the loved image of Lord Clinton from my bosom; and although I did every thing in my power to render the life of my husband pleasant, my own wretchedness still increased; the adverse cloud which had shut out every prospect of happiness, was not likely to disperse. Lord Brandon continued inflexible in his resentment, which my marriage seemed even to strengthen, so that I had been the means of rendering the barrier between the father and son still more difficult to be surmounted. In about a year after my marriage with Mr. Wyndham, Lord Brandon was taken dangerously ill. I intreated, by the most affecting letters, that he would extend his forgiveness to Lord Clinton, and release him from the heavy and cruel curse that had rendered his life miserable. Mr. Wyndham visited his Lordship on the same account. He altered his sentiments partially. He would not be prevailed on to extricate his unfortunate son from his portion, but excluded those of his posterity who were bred Protestants. This he certainly did, to induce Lord Clinton never to have his children in-

structed in the Catholic faith." Augusta could not help exclaiming against so barbarous and unjustifiable an exertion of parental authority, which could never have the sanction of the Deity. "It is true, my dear," returned Mrs. Wyndham, "and I most heartily hope, that the Almighty will never suffer so sinful an act to have efficacy in the next world; but we too frequently see, and in this instance most particularly, that the curses of the parent have great influence on the happiness of the child. We are taught, that the sins of our fathers are visited on the children; in a moral sense that appears cruel to us, but yet it almost always happens, that children suffer from the iniquity of the parent. But to return to my narration: the death of Lord Brandon gave the title and estates to his son, and enabled him to settle his affairs in Lisbon, and prepare for his return to his native country, alas, never to reach it. I never learnt the truth of the misfortune which overwhelmed him, with any degree of certainty. I know not whether he had taken his passage for England, together with his Lady and infant, or whether it happened from any excursion of pleasure on the sea—but he, and all were lost." Her tears now flowed a-fresh.

"Oh," cried Augusta, "how similar their hapless fate to those of my dear parents. Good God!" she added, "it may be possible that they were my parents. The distance of time, and many circumstances—a foreign vessel—from a Catholic country." The idea occasioned so much perturbation in the heart of Augusta, that she was almost overcome by the agitation she felt. Mrs. Wyndham was fearful of indulging the hope, and yet even she herself sometimes was led

to believe there might be some foundation for the surmise. Augusta, ever sanguine, formed a thousand conjectures, which she fancied corroborated with her hopes, and among the rest, the mystical circumstance of a picture, bearing so perfect a resemblance to herself, being found in the cabinet of Lord Glamore. The mention of his name, made them both recur to the situation of that family; and then her imagination was full of the result of the letter she had written to his Lordship; and the events her justification might produce.

Mrs. Wyndham assured her most tenderly, of her protection and countenance through life. The affirmation of Sir William Forbes would do away every prejudice, even if the death of Lord Glamore should have prevented his making her the restitution she so much pleaded for; and her excellent friend farther told her, that as Lord Brandon had bequeathed five thousand pounds to her, that she would settle immediately on her, and at her death, make an addition to her fortune, as should enable her to live where, and how she pleased. The grateful acknowledgments of Augusta was in proportion to the sense she felt of this almost unexampled kindness in the worthy Mrs. Wyndham, who in herself experienced the sweetest sentiments arising from benevolence and affection; an affection which the sympathy of their minds had rendered permanent.

CHAP. XXVII.

A RAY OF SUN-SHINE.

By the next morning a servant in mourning arrived at Wyndham Place, with a letter to Miss Monckley, but before we allow so much indulgence to our readers' curiosity, as to show them the contents, we think it more methodical to go back to London, and retrace the history of the young Lord Glamore, from the time he parted with so much violence from our heroine, and even tore from his bosom her loved resemblance, vowing likewise to tear away all fond remembrance of herself.

The high raised hopes with which he had fed his fancy, on his visit at Brandon Castle, and which he had cherished during his ride to Wyndham Place, had rendered his disappointment more severe than the long harassed state of his mind and body could support. Both had nearly fallen a sacrifice to his long indulged passion for Augusta; and the paragraph in the news-paper, had him for its object of concern. The violence of his fever, had, for a great while, the most alarming symptoms, and filled the bosom of his disconsolate mother with a grief bordering on despair. He was just pronounced out of danger, when Augusta's letter, (the contents of which, if not remembered, may be referred to in page 369) arrived. As many letters on business had come during his illness, he had requested Lady Gla-

more to open all addressed to him ; of course, this was carried to her. How was her mind agitated with grief, by such a discovery, as she thought of the immorality of her darling son, and the too glaring proof, that he imbibed the same principles as his dissolute father had been actuated by.

“ Oh,” she cried, while her heart was bursting with anguish, “ must I no longer esteem my only child ? could he practise so much cruelty to an unhappy innocent orphan ? ” She could scarcely support herself to her son’s chamber, and her virtuous soul revolted from the idea of his baseness. But the consideration of the necessity of restoring peace to the wounded heart, and broken health of Augusta Monckley, made her stifle the mingled emotions that struggled in a fond mother’s heart, and composing her spirits as well as she could, she approached the bedside of Lord Glamore. Her face still bore the impression of strong grief ; tenderly did her son enquire the cause of those traces of sorrow, so visible on her countenance.

“ How often,” she answered, “ have I strived to discover the cause of the melancholy which had so long pressed on your bosom. Alas, I little knew from what a dreadful source it had arisen ! when the mind is supported by a conscions rectitude, the arrows of affliction are pointless ; but when guilt sharpens the weapon, it becomes barbed, and rankles in the wound.”

“ To what is my dearest mother alluding ? ” asked Lord Glamore.

“ Misfortunes of the most irremediable nature have indeed pressed on my bosom, and nearly brought me to my grave, where I believe they alone will find

relief; but I am not conscience-struck; no, I have been cruelly deceived and mistaken, yet I cannot charge my soul with having sharpened the arrow which has pierced my bosom by guilt."

For heaven's sake, my dear madam, explain yourself?"

Lady Glamore could not restrain her tears.

"Is the name of Augusta Monckley unknown to you? and does not your conscience accuse you of having rendered her for ever wretched? Alas, does not your change of countenance, and the agitation her name occasions, give too strong a proof?"

"Augusta Monckley?" he repeated, almost fainting, "What of her?" "Yes," with a voice a little strengthened, "I own she is the source of all my despair and sufferings; but my conscience accuses me not."

"Then it must be an hardened one," exclaimed Lady Glamore, rising. "Then must you be unworthy the affection of a tender mother. Take this letter, and act the part of a man of honour; such as I had fondly hoped my son would ever have been. Oh, my God, you have proved your relationship to spring indeed from your unhappy father."

Little aware of the contents, Lord Glamore hastily snatched up the letter; but what were his feelings on the perusal. Eager, however, to remove the mistake of his mother, he caught her hand, "Oh, my dearest madam, and could you for one moment harbour so base a suspicion of your son? this letter is addressed to my father; and is my Augusta innocent?" he added, softening into tears of joy and grief. "Dear

injured Augusta! yes, you shall have ample restitution."

"And is my beloved innocent from so black a charge," cried his affectionate mother, throwing her arms round him, "then I am happy and we will together again peruse this affecting epistle, written evidently from the bleeding heart of injured innocence." They mutually shed many tears over the lines expressive of so much sorrow, which the unfortunate Augusta had penned.

"Have you looked over your poor father's papers?" said Lady Glamore, "they may throw some light on this dark and mysterious business, but to our hearts I think no other proofs can be wanting."

"And yet," cried Lord Glamore, "I taxed her with guilt, I reviled her as the most infamous of her sex. I brought her nearly to the verge of the grave; but now I will open my whole soul to my mother." He then began a relation of the circumstances of his first acquaintance, and attachment to our heroine, and the different agitations which had accompanied the latter, together with his various interviews with her, and the effect his love, and repeated disappointments had had upon his health and happiness, both which had been destroyed by his perturbations and fruitless struggles to conquer so ill-fated and ill-placed an affection."

"I could listen to you for ever, my beloved son, but I am still more anxious to relieve the distress of this injured girl. I will look over your father's bureau; he used to keep letters by him. Have you not met with papers relative to this affair?"

“ I never had courage to seek for any—finding her picture, but which the dear creature most solemnly avows she never had taken, so powerfully convinced me of the atrocity of her conduct, that I wanted no further proof. But go, my dear madam, to ease her mind; let every proof be manifest, to my heart she is already cleared, and more dear than ever. Oh, my mother,” continued he, throwing his arm round her neck as she sat beside him, leaning his head on her bosom. “ Oh, my dearest mother, the whole world is not so dear to me as my loved Augusta. If she could but pardon the injury my suspicions have done her, if she would but listen to my penitence, my sorrow for having fallen into so gross an error. Oh, how exquisite would be my joy! then I might hope to be happy—then I might hope to be reinstated in her affections—for a thousand little circumstances unite to form the idea, that I am not indifferent to her. Then would you see your son restored to life and happiness—and oh, how you would adore Augusta Menckley !”

“ My beloved son,” she returned, pressing him to her maternal bosom, and kissing his forehead, “ You have no one to consult but yourself. But forget not you are the last of a noble family, enriched too by the loss of mine. Your happiness is, however, my first object, let it be but obtained with honour.” She then left him to look over the bureau, belonging to her late husband, nobly fortifying her soul against the trials to which, perhaps, she should expose her own feelings, by fresh discoveries of his unfaithfulness to herself, in various instances, by the sole motive of doing strict justice to the injured fame of one, in whom she felt an interest, for the sake of her beloved son. She found

several parcels of letters. Lord Glamore was a methodical libertine, and used to receive pleasure in looking over letters, that debased his mind, for having given the occasion of their being written. Lady Glamore was obliged to open several, and all those in which she found the name of Augusta, she brought to her son. Among the first were those which the infamous Lord Glamore had written to Augusta while she was at the rectory, and nothing could be more conclusive in the investigation of her innocence, than the *carte blanche*, in which she had written two or three lines immediately over the signature of Glamore; and on the outside was penned, in his own hand, a severe denunciation of vengeance against the devoted victim of his illicit passion.

After Lord Glamore's perusal of one letter, written by Mrs. Spencer to his father, on discovering the escape of Augusta from her house the evening preceding that, which, had their well-formed plan taken effect, her everlasting destruction would have been sealed, he thought it but loss of time to look over any other proofs.

"Oh! write, my dear mother," he said, with earnestness; "say every thing to restore comfort to the heart of that lovely and deeply-injured girl; till I am assured of her forgiveness of my cruel behaviour to her, I cannot assume courage, even if my trembling hand could hold a pen."

"Charming young woman!" cried Lady Glamore, "I will not only write, but, as soon as I can leave you with safety, I will go to her. I am impatient to behold such excellence. What you have related of her has interested all my feelings. I will plead the cause of my beloved son, and can do it better person-

ally than by letter: however, I will dispatch one of the servants early to-morrow morning, and be convinced, my dear Arthur, that nothing your affectionate mother will omit to constitute your happiness. If the amiable Miss Monckley is disposed to receive her's at your hand, the alliance will refute every ill impression which the world may have imbibed from the cruel designs of your unhappy father. How thankful am I to heaven that so vile a crime was prevented from being put in execution, both for his soul's sake, and the dear suffering Augusta's eternal peace. I trust the tortures, in which my poor deluded husband ended his ill-spent life, has proved an atonement for his misdeeds. Heaven is merciful in its wrath, and I hope he was a sincere penitent. Oh! would to heaven this letter had arrived in the time of his existence! He would have died more sure of pardon, had he been able to have made restitution himself for his intended baseness; that task, the most pleasing in the world, devolves upon us; and, oh! my Arthur, if a fond mother is not too partial, and the heart of Augusta is at liberty, and willing to resign itself to your keeping, how ample will be the restitution?"

"Ah! my dear Madam, you are, indeed, too partial to your son. You have not yet seen Augusta. I dare not flatter myself with hope, yet I will strive to live for her, and if she is not your daughter, never let me be importuned to take a wife, for my resolution has been long fixed, even from the first hour of my seeing her, never to have any other."

Lady Glamore conjured him not to suffer any melancholy prospects to intervene, that should retard his recovery; but to endeavour to get some rest,

promising, most faithfully, that in a day or two she would undertake her embassy to Wyndham-Place, and doubted not of succeeding to their mutual wishes. She then left him to send off her packet to Augusta, containing all the correspondence that would serve to investigate the dark deeds that had been machinated for the ruin of our heroine, the perusal of which will clear up what has appeared mystical to our readers, and will serve to amuse them during the time that Lady Glamore must be supposed to take in travelling, though she used great expedition, to Wyndham-Place.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE COALITION OF GUILE AND VICE.

THE letter from Lady Glamore was delivered singly to Augusta, but accompanied with a packet of some size. Our poor agitated heroine was hardly able to break the seal. A thousand conflicting fears and ideas occupied her faculties, and almost rendered her powerless. Mrs. Wyndham used every means to recompose her mind, and made her take a small quantity of a cordial mixture before she attempted to read, hanging over her with the fond affection of a comforting parent, soothing her fears, and encouraging her hopes for a speedy end to her troubles.

The contents of Lady Glamore's letter was most conciliating to the purpose of easing her heart, and was couched in the following terms :

“To give restoration of peace to the bosom of the amiable and much-injured Miss Monckley, is the task of the widow of the unhappy Lord Glamore. More sweet would it have been, if it had likewise been accompanied with instances of his penitence for his intended crimes. I will not dilate on so painful a subject. The author of your misfortunes has for more than four months been incapable of rendering you farther injury. May the mercy of heaven have accepted the sufferings of his end, to wash away the errors of his life !

“But every atonement that his remaining family can make you, most amiable Augusta, shall be accorded with the most obvious proofs of their regard ; they will know no peace or happiness till your’s are restored. It is hard to develope the practices of iniquity in one so near to them : but it is still more difficult to be unjust to injured innocence. A large packet accompanies this, which will unfold to you the schemes which heaven and your own virtue rendered abortive. And will the charming Miss Monckley allow the long wretched wife of Lord Glamore to have the honour of seeking her acquaintance ? Oh ! yes, the character I have heard of you prompts me to put my wish in immediate execution, and as soon as a fond and doting mother can leave the best of men and sons free from the danger of a violent fever, that has nearly deprived her of all comfort and hope, she will hasten to behold one she so passionately desires to press to her bosom.

“Wyndham Place is the habitation of a lady who has long been much esteemed by me. May I venture uninvited by Mrs. Wyndham ? Yet, why do I ask ?

I shall not wait for an answer ; but set off as soon as possible after the courier, who has the honour of conveying this to the hand of Miss Monckley, from her much interested, and much admiring,

“ Ann Glamore.”

“ Oh ! what a reward,” cried Augusta, kissing the letter, “ for all my former sufferings is this sweet assurance of regard from Lady Glamore ! And yet,” renewing her tears, “ why do I feel this unconquerable weight and oppression on my heart ? It cannot be that I have any suspicions that it is some further scheme. Oh ! assist me, my beloved friend, with your counsels. Too fatally erring as my own have proved, every thing now appears illusive to my sight.” She leaned her head on her hand, giving way to a stream of tears, that forced themselves from a contrariety of causes.

“ No, my sweetest, and too apprehensive, Augusta, this is no illusion. The person of Lady Glamore is well known to me. My emotion at seeing her will be great ; but my bleeding memory shall find its wounds healed by the balm that will be poured into your’s.”

“ And what will be my emotions to find myself pressed to the bosom of the widow of the man to whom all my unhappiness was owing—to the mother ! Oh, my God ! and he has been dangerously ill too. Yes, dear amiable Lady Glamore, it is I, who was the cause of so nearly depriving you of the best of sons. My stubborn pride, which would not suffer me to explain the truth to him. Ah ! how dearly have I paid for it !”

“ Come, come,” cried Mrs. Wyndham, “ let us not

look back, except it be over these letters; we will not suffer our minds to be distressed, but relieve them as fast as we can. I will open this parcel, and arrange the contents in order, that we may pursue the clue which entangled you in such misfortunes. Do you, in the mean time, take a turn on the Terrace while the sun looks so smiling on you. Compose your spirits, and receive, with thankfulness, the opening prospect of happiness."

In a little time Augusta returned to her friend, and, quietly seating herself, listened, while she read the inclosures.

LETTER I.

To the Earl of Glamore.

My dear Lord,

I have turned over in my fertile mind, as you call it, the whole of the information you have honoured me with. This scheme and prize is no common one; but I know I may depend on your generosity for acceding to my terms. You will not think a thousand pounds too much; and when you are tired of the pretty play-thing, (for, notwithstanding your vows of now fixing for life, you must excuse my laughing, Jove does the same at lovers' perjuries. Do I not know your Lordship?) you must then allow me to make what I can of her.

You tell me she has only a weak simple creature with her by way of servant. By that engine I shall move the mighty machine of her virtue, which you have tried to assail by very prevalent methods already, but which have failed. But be not discouraged; your Lordship's oath shall not be forfeited.

I have weighed all you told me of the mystery of her birth. She shall discover her parents, at least her mother. I will send my precious Branscombe to you to learn some particulars, that, having been on the spot, you may be informed of; that fellow is worth his weight in gold, and for that metal will do every thing. Your Lordship must supply him with some to travel. He is very adroit in finding methods of winding himself into the confidence of fools, and making the most advantage of it. I shall tutor him when he has received your Lordship's commands.

In the mean time be assured, no efforts shall be wanting on my part to convince you how much

I am, my Lord,
Your Lordship's ever devoted,
C. S.

LETTER II.

To the same.

I have, by this day's post, received a letter from Branscombe, which I inclose to your Lordship, being much hurried with my daily and nightly concerns. Let me see your Lordship either this evening or to-morrow morning, merely to chat with you, for I have nothing new to offer in my house at present, though, I flatter myself, my boarding-school at — will turn out both pleasant and advantageous.

● I remain, my Lord, &c.

C. S.

Inclosure from Branscombe.

Honoured Madam,

I have surmounted one great difficulty, that is, I have discovered where the Lady resides, and hope to

bring about an intimacy with her servant Martha, at Malvern Park. I learned from the game-keeper, who were the late domestics of Mr. Monckley, and found an old couple, who were newly married. The man was very shy of giving any information about his young mistress, as I find several of Lord Glamore's servants had been very solicitous to gain intelligence of the place she had retired to. I ventured to execrate the vile purpose of his Lordship, and by those little artifices, which you have so often praised me for, got out of the old woman the name of the people where she lodges.

Yesterday, at a fair, I met with this same Martha. I believe, Madam, you will allow I know the sex, and how the most cunning, as well as the most simple, are to be managed. I have had pretty good experience with all sorts, both before and since I have been retained in your service. To get acquainted was a very easy matter. As the best method of effecting my purpose, I fell in love with her directly, from the likeness, I told her, I discovered in her features to my poor dear wife, with whom I had lived happily for seven years. Such a dawdy I never saw! Not capable of giving me pleasure, even for half an hour, so I shall be most honourably in love with her. She has promised to meet me this evening in a green lane near the house. I am, so may it please you, John Smith, the best travelling name in the world, and have got a farm about twenty miles from this village, with a pretty house, and yard well stocked, and only want a clever woman to share my good things. I have such a gudgeon to hook, that my bait will easily be swallowed, and by the loquacity of my beloved, I

shall learn every thing I want to know: but I will not close my letter till to-morrow, when I hope to add something satisfactory to our affairs.

Blessed be nature for having given women tongues and not brains enough to let them remain silent! My dear Patty has told me every circumstance that has come to her knowledge, and after the third interview, I have promised her marriage. Got her consent to be my wife, and, I believe in my conscience, she would, at this moment, do every thing for me, and with me, that I could desire. I have bestowed upon her a few sweet kisses by way of sealing our bargain. Her Lady keeps by her all the habiliments of her infant state, which I have prevailed on the foolish wench to let me see; but I have not pressed that matter very close, as I must fight shy, and quit her for a day or two, or we shall have matters prematurely ripe. I understand Miss Monckley is very desirous of obtaining a knowledge of her family, and I have given hints to Martha, that she should drop to her Lady, the necessity of making some inquiries; but above all, to be secret in her own amours, as a thing of the last consequence. You will see the absolute advantage and expediency of some inquiry being set on foot by Miss Monckley. I shall set out to-morrow morning for my farm. The delay will answer very well, as there will be both hopes and fears on Martha's side to fix her more firmly my own.

On my return I will again have the honour of writing to you, and remain,

Honoured Madam,

Your faithful servant,

T. BRANSCOMBE.

LETTER III.

Sent enclosed to Lord Glamore.

Madam,

Every thing goes on to our wish. I have seen all the baby-things. I can give you a very accurate description of them all.—Jachimo was not more so in his list of Imogen's furniture. I have, at a distance, seen the Lady, and a lovely creature she is, by heaven. I only wish his Lordship would appoint me to break her in. Such a feast as she would be, has not many a year fallen to my share ; but of that hereafter.—

I am so much in love that, like all true-hearted lovers, I begin to fear, that, as Martha is such an excellent and faithful servant, her Lady will be unwilling she should marry, and I have set my fancy so strong on Martha being my wife, besides the disadvantage of my house going to wreck and ruin ; for somehow, now I am in love, I cannot manage things properly, so I have worked up my turtle to broach the subject of inquiry, and advised her to strengthen her mistress's inclinations, by saying she will never be safe from the base Lord till she is protected by her own family, if any exist. Thus stimulated by her fears of losing me, I have gained the maid, and by casual hints shall induce her to prevail on her Lady to advertise, which will be the signal of my departure, for I am tired of my part in the business : however, my dear Madam, mistake me not, I have no qualms of conscience, only I find nothing diverting : I am obliged to live most virtuously, to maintain my character as an honest man, and the devil of it is, that

Martha is both too old and too ugly to have any thing to do with. Had she been pretty, or even young, I could have amoured myself to my heart's content : but for me, who have had, by some means or other, some of the finest girls in the world, I am grown too nice to sin without some temptation ; so Martha will remain for me as good a maid as I found her.

I shall not close this letter, as it contains but little more than the business in *prospectus*.

Martha has just stolen out to tell me, that on Miss Monckley having heard from old David, that fresh inquiries have been set on foot, and that a bribe was offered him. (This, I suppose, he says to enhance the merit of his fidelity, for I never offered money ; faith, I love it too well to part with it, when my own brains can atchieve the matter without.) She had fallen into the utmost grief of heart ; so Martha, by way of consolation, threw in her advice, and even ventured to tell her, she was going to change her condition. The consequence of all this is, that her mistress will advertise in two separate papers. I now, all rapture in the prospect of soon being married to my deary, pressed her to fix the day of my happiness, and to-morrow the bans are to be published at Malvern parish church. I will contrive to get these precious letters, and give them to you to answer, as if you had seen them in the newspapers. Then I shall take a tender leave of my love—for ever, thank heaven ! We will contrive to send her of a fool's errand, whenever you have planned the execution of our glorious scheme ; she had better be out of the way : I think I have it. I will appoint her to meet me at my farm. I should suppose there need not

be more than a fortnight necessary before you appear; that time will be quite sufficient to remove all suspicion of being too quick in our motions. Yes, I will, at all hazards, request Martha to set out on her wild-goose chase on Monday fortnight, to meet me at the farm.

I shall send this to-night, and to-morrow, having obtained my credentials, shall set off for London, and, with all speed, give you every further information in the power of,

Honoured Madam,

Your faithful servant,

T. BRANSCOMBE.

LETTER IV.

To Lord Glamore.

My dear Lord,

Branscombe is arrived. I hugged the ugly rogue with rapture for his great cleverness. I am sure you will think little of my having given him twenty guineas beside what you allowed him. I shall not scruple to place that sum in your account. In a few days I shall write to the fair advertiser, to request some further explanation. We must be cautious and wary in our movements.

I am, with all respect,

Your Lordship's devoted,

C. S.

LETTER V.

To the same.

Give me joy, my Lord! Give me my thousand pounds! They were never so well bestowed. What

an angel I brought to my house last night! I wonder not at your adoration.* She is a *morceau* for a prince. But do not presume to come hither. What a character I have heard of you! "Go, naughty man, I can't abide you." What elegance or figure—what beauty and expression of complexion and features. Oh, God! she is far before any I have seen for ages, and her mind, too, so highly cultivated; that, indeed, is against us. I had rather, if it was the same thing to you, that she was as silly as she is lovely, we should have less difficulty in bringing her to our lure. But have I not got her safe within my walls? Who, if they could speak, would tell pretty tales, how pretty girls are subdued. I cannot now write any more. I long for the time to introduce you to her. Lovely as she is, two or three months hence she will pall on your appetite, though now so keen, and then my harvest will come. The anticipation fills me with delight.

Adieu, my dear Lord,
Ever your devoted,
C. S.

LETTER VI.
To Lord Glamore.

My Lord,

I shall be most happy, nearly as much so as your Lordship, when the *coup de main* is struck. I have dearly earned my money. Consider the trouble I have had with this girl, so well educated, so enlightened, so nice an observer, and of such refined delicacy! It has cost me infinite pains to keep up the deception of decency, though I doubt not she has

already seen enough in my house, notwithstanding my strict guard, to give her but an ill opinion of her mother's propriety of sentiment. I have admitted no other of my family than Betsy and Clara, by much the best behaved of my girls. The rest I have kept in next house. Here we are, to appearance, quite sober and modest, at least, comparatively so ; but I fear the lovely Augusta would speak very differently of us. I have got a letter of her writing to an old clergyman. She expresses her situation with doubt, yet sufficient to inform me that the affair had better be completed speedily. The excellence of her understanding, and a mind, I see, given to much reflection, will soon convince her that my conduct is improper, though she may not precisely know why it is so. Oh ! the lectures she has read me on female propriety, and female delicacy. She absolutely has sometimes staggered me ; but to evade, or rather put an end to them, I have assumed the authoritative tone of a parent, and so for the present silenced her ; but at the same time, perhaps, alarmed her fears, though she cannot understand the foundation for them.

I have left her charmed with the munificence of my present of jewels, and her elegant dress. Vanity may do something for us. How like an angel she looks !

Why do you object to Branscombe's assistance ? When once subdued she would willingly embrace your offer. You know this by experience ; but you are partial to your own prowess. I wish you success with all my heart. The scheme I think feasible. I will take care of her lemonade for that evening ; the

rest of the care is your's. It will be a most glorious achievement. I will not send you this : I shall of course see you in the evening, but perhaps have no opportunity of private conversation. To-morrow I shall know her sentiments of that scene of splendour she will witness this night. You must not come to us to-morrow ; but the following night will, if your powers fail not, put you in possession of the loveliest creature breathing. I hear her.

In continuation.

We have passed the most of the day *tête-à-tête*. If you can bring her to your terms quietly, you will have an angel for your companion. I never met with such an understanding, and such sweetness : But why think of perfections it is our purpose to destroy ?

Who do you think broke in upon us about ten o'clock ? That miserable mummy of mischief his Grace, with one eye, drunk as a Lord, and fond as his own representative, an ape. He terrified Augusta out of her senses. What a pity that you were not present, it might have antedated your expected pleasures by twenty-four hours. He caught her most impudently in his arms, and she most heroine-like, struck him so forcibly on the face, that she sent the debilitated Duke reeling to the sofa, with his glass eye shivered to atoms. Though I was cursedly angry with him, I could not help laughing at his woeful figure ; but the risible fit over, I gave him such a severe dressing as his outrageous behaviour merited. When we had tired ourselves with oaths and execrations, we emptied a bottle of champagne to meliorate

our anger, and then I put him into the chamber with Betsy, who had just got rid of an engagement with Sir William Forbes.

Augusta had locked her door, and gone to bed; from whence she told me she was greatly fatigued, and wished me a good night.

Soon after came Branscombe, in hopes, I believe, he should be engaged in your service. He seems horridly mortified at your declaring you would not have his interference. I was forced to bribe him to keep him in temper; that I know you will not think much of.

It is now one o'clock, and I shall prepare for repose. I wonder how much you will sleep to-morrow night. Again, I wish all success to attend you. I would erase that wish, for it savours of a doubt. No, there can be none: when have you and I failed in schemes like these?

Oh, for a curse to kill with! How shall I find words to tell you? Yet know it you must speedily that every engine may be set to work. In a word, we have lost her! First recover that. I did not tell your lordship last night, as I thought it a trick of some of the girls, when Branscombe was preparing to go, he found the parlour door locked. I rang the bell, and Thomas came to the door. The key was in it. I laughed at the joke of Clara, as I supposed, but certainly that young devil Augusta had done it. How she escaped I know not.

This morning I would not have her disturbed, thinking she would have but little rest to night, so that no inquiry was set about till within this hour. I sent up to her chamber. The door was fastened, and

on no answer being given to our repeated calling her, I ordered the door to be broke open. She had not been in bed, but no where could she be found. Oh ! how will this information make you execrate. I have sworn myself hoarse already. What can have become of her ? A stranger and a wanderer, I think, and trust she will soon be recovered. I am puzzled to death with my fruitless conjectures. For God's sake ! my dear Lord, do use every endeavour, as I will, to discover where she has concealed herself. Heavens ! what a disappointment of our approaching success ! That cursed Duke certainly alarmed her fears. I am sure I can confide in all of my own family ; they are as much at a loss as myself.

I am in the utmost confusion, so perplexed are all my thoughts. If you can come to me do. Our joint endeavours may assist each other.

I am, my dear Lord,

most faithfully your's,

C. S."

Here ended the precious correspondence of the vile emissaries of the equally vile Lord Glamore. Augusta sickened with horror as she listened to Mrs. Wyndham, who read each letter in turn. How thankful was she to Providence for aiding her own endeavours to escape this den of misery !—Another night, and it would have been too late to have avoided the snare laid for her destruction ! Mrs. Wyndham pressed her to her bosom, while Augusta looked fearfully round, hardly yet conceiving herself removed from danger, so forcibly was her mind impressed with

the horror of that she had so wonderfully, almost miraculously, escaped.

She sunk on her knees, to give that adoration to her Creator, who had preserved her from eternal destruction, and her health barely re-established, made her nearly droop under the agitation of her spirits. Mrs. Wyndham made her retire early to rest, to enable her to recover herself, as she doubted not in a day or two they should have the promised visit from Lady Glamore.

CHAP. XXIX.

THE GREAT MYSTERY SOLVED.

THE affection, almost maternal, which Mrs. Wyndham entertained for Augusta, made her so entirely coincide in the joy which now dawned on this amiable girl, from the prospect of having her fame so clearly established, that it gave strength to her own mind, and enabled it to look forward to the interesting meeting between herself and the sister of a man ever so dear to her heart and memory. She most nobly struggled with the tender emotions which seized her bosom when the renewal of scenes, so destructive to all her former happiness, arose to her recollection, and, above all, strove to conceal her secret anguish from her loved Augusta. She suffered herself to be deceived by the apparent calmness of Mrs. Wyndham's countenance, because she feared to investigate the matter might occasion more grief to her friend,

therefore contented herself by every redoubled attention to increase the attachment that subsisted between them.

Augusta was taking her usual morning's walk on the Terrace, which was at the back of the house, and by its situation prevented her knowing of the arrival of Lady Glamore's carriage. Her Ladyship had slept at Carmarthen, that she might not either encounter the bad roads in the dark, or break in upon Mrs. Wyndham at an unseasonable hour. Poor Mrs. Wyndham found all her heroism receding fast when the name of Lady Glamore was announced; but recalling her fleeting spirits, and strengthening them by the reflection that this meeting would be productive of happiness and restored health to her dear Augusta, she checked her emotions, and approached to receive her guest with an assumed composure.

Lady Glamore could not behold her without recurring memory presenting past events, and trembling, and agitated, returned her friendly salutation. It was their mutual interest to conceal their mutual feelings.

As Mrs. Wyndham led her to the drawing-room, Lady Glamore said, "I trust, my dear Madam, I am not an unexpected visitant?"

"Oh, no!" cried Mrs. Wyndham; "on the contrary a most welcome one. Your presence, Lady Glamore, will make us all happy:" and, ringing the bell, desired her own woman would apprize Miss Monckley, with gentleness, that Lady Glamore hoped to be favoured with her company.

"I am impatient, you may well think, my dear Mrs. Wyndham, to see that amiable young creature;

your protection stamps the most invaluable merit upon her."

"But when you see, and become acquainted with my charming Augusta, you will allow she wants no other claim to affection than her own worth. She is as much superior in merit, as she is in form to any woman I ever beheld. She is adored by all my family. Now shall I see her restored to health and happiness, such as she truly deserves. Her sufferings have been great, and most nobly has she sustained herself through very trying scenes."

While Mrs. Wyndham was making the tender eulogium of Augusta, she hastily entered the room. Lady Glamore rose, when, as she fixed her eyes upon her, she clasped her hands together, sinking almost lifeless in the chair, exclaimed, "Merciful God! what do I see? It is the form, the express image of my sister, my beloved Brandon's wife!" Both Mrs. Wyndham and Augusta flew to her, unable to understand her broken sentences. "Oh! tell me, tell me," she continued to cry out, "say who you are. From whence did you come? To whom did you belong?"

"Alas!" said the pale, trembling, Augusta, "I belong to no one: a poor shipwrecked infant, supported by charity!"

"Oh! it must be so. Such a resemblance I cannot mistake. Oh, God! could I have thought, in the person of this injured innocent, to discover my nearest, my only relation, the child of my brother? But see," added she, in an alarmed voice, "I have killed the lovely creature! She faints. Oh! help to support her. My impetuous joy will be her death;"

while her own hysterical sobs proved that she was herself almost in as helpless a situation.

Mrs. Wyndham, scarcely less overcome, ran out of the room to get some assistance, and speedily returned with some drops and water. Lady Glamore had lifted the fainting Augusta to the sofa: Mrs. Wyndham trembled so much that she could hardly hold the glass in her hand. "Take some yourself, my dear Lady, she is recovering: Pray take some. Oh, my God! what a discovery is this! My life, my Augusta!" continued this excellent friend, as she folded her arms round her, "what joy is this! You have supported scenes of woe, support yourself in so marked a change."

Lady Glamore clasped her with rapture to her bosom, calling her by the tenderest names of newly-recognized relationship. Augusta almost doubted, and yet fondly hoped she should not be mistaken. She begged to hear a thousand anecdotes to strengthen her belief. She would have all the infantile property produced.

"Yes," cried Lady Glamore, "they will incontestibly prove your reality. The caps were all my own work, so was the cradle quilt. Oh! yes, yes, she is my niece," she added, flying to her, and catching her to her bosom, "my own, my lovely niece!"

What rapture, even to agony, filled the heart of Augusta! She could not find words. Her sobs and tears were eloquently expressive of the mixed sensations which overwhelmed her soul. All the events of her life were now placed before her, as if depicted on canvass. The retrospect overpowered her, and

fortunately her good friend, Dr. Watkins, called in by accident. Hearing of this most unexpected circumstance of discovery from the servants, he begged to be admitted, and likewise insisted on drawing a little blood from the arm of his lovely patient, who was not yet sufficiently established in her health to bear without danger, so violent an exertion of spirits. "Come," cried he, smiling tenderly upon her, "I must take a little of your noble blood from you."

"Noble, indeed!" said Lady Glamore. "This dear girl inherits both the title and estate of the earldom of Brandon. Oh! how willingly do I resign the latter to her. Too long has the only heiress of Brandon been kept from her rights!"

"Well, then, my dear little Countess," said the good old man, "I beg, for the love I ever bore you, for Mrs. Wyndham will tell you I wanted to adopt you for my daughter, do pray take care and get health as fast as you can; and now, as I have done you a very necessary piece of service, let me have the honour of kissing your ladyship's hand, and, from my soul, wishing you every happiness so much excellence must ever merit."

"No, not my hand, my dear and worthy friend," cried Augusta, "you are entitled to a stronger proof of affection from my gratitude and esteem," and she gracefully and cheerfully suffered him to take a kiss from her charming lips.

Lady Glamore with difficulty could withdraw her eyes from her lovely neice, who sat between her and Mrs. Wyndham. "Oh! my dear Madam," said she, "I have heard so much, and, indeed, in my earliest days, knew so much of you, that you ever

possessed a large share of my esteem, though the fates decreed we should not be related. But look on this angel—such was Maria—such her lovely form! Yes, she is the exact counterpart of my adored sister.”

“Then, surely, my dear, ever loved Clinton must be pardoned. Alas! my tender regrets left no room for resentment.”

“Heavens! then,” cried Augusta, starting up, “that picture in Lord Glamore’s possession, was undoubtedly my unhappy mother’s.”

Mrs. Wyndham, who had kept it in her pocket, presented it to Lady Glamore. “Good God! this is indeed the miniature of my Maria. My grief for her death, together with that of my beloved brother, almost bore me to the grave; and my Lord took this picture, over which I was continually weeping, and never would give it to me. I know it to be her’s, and will convince you by opening a secret spring,” which she did, discovering a locket with hair, and the cyphers of M. S. her maiden initials.

“How came you by it, my love?”

Augusta, deeply blushing, hesitatingly said, “It was found in Lord Glamore’s bureau, and, I believe, fatally mistaken for mine.”

“Oh! I recollect,” cried Lady Glamore, but added nothing more; then turning to Mrs. Wyndham, “You, no doubt, Madam, have heard all this dear creature’s history. It would be too severe a task to require the relation now from her. I am sufficiently convinced she is nearly and dearly allied to me. Give me leave, then, to request she may henceforward be styled, as she is entitled by birth, the Countess of Brandon. The estates, I believe, you know, and

title, were entailed on the issue of my brother. He had never any other child. There are very large arrears on the estate, the rental of which is sixteen thousand per annum, which this instant becomes her due. The profuse manner in which my late husband lived, alas ! his character is too well known for his widow to attempt to conceal, may at present render it difficult to pay up the arrears."

"Talk not of arrears, title, estate, or any thing, my dearest honoured Lady Glamore, but the felicity of being acknowledged your niece. Is not that circumstance all-sufficient? Too happy is Augusta to think of any other. I covet not wealth. My fame restored—my family discovered—and to feel myself beloved by two such friends—what a sordid, ignoble mind must I possess, if any other joy could find entrance in my happy bosom? Yes, this transport wants to be allayed. It is too, too great: Oh ! then, tell me, what yet I know not, of my unhappy parents! My dear Mrs. Wyndham, in the account of her own sorrows, gave me their history till they went abroad. Oh, my God ! how little did I then think I was their child ! My tears, then, were shed from sympathy : now they long to stream, as they have often done, over the merciless ocean that separated me for ever from them !"

Mrs Wyndham thought it expedient to interpose, as they had all sacrificed sufficiently to their mental feelings, and requested Augusta to postpone her curiosity till she had done the honours of the house to her noble guest, and they had much exceeded their usual dinner hour, after which she would no longer object to the relation of events so interesting, and in

which each would be inclined to participate. The two Miss Wyndhams were now introduced to Lady Glamore, and what was more surprising to the girls, Lady Brandon was introduced to them.

“What, then, are you married?” cried Louisa.

“No, my dear,” returned the young Countess, “nor ever mean to be.”

“But what will my cousin, Sir Maurice, say to that resolution?” said Caroline.

“Oh! he knows it is no new one, Caroline, and has acquiesced in it.”

“Not from his heart, though, I am sure,” she replied.

“But now you are a Lady of quality, you must marry a Lord, I suppose,” said the little Louisa, who had jumped up in her lap.

“Would you wish to part with your dear friend Augusta, my dear Louisa?”

“I would not wish to part with you, but I have lost Augusta; I must never call you so now you are a Lady.”

“You will ever find her in me unchanged, and, if your beloved Mamma will allow me, I shall never quit this house while I live.”

“Ah, my sweet Augusta!” said Mrs. Wyndham, “you will alter your mind. Augusta Monckley might do as she pleased, and never would I have parted with her; but the Countess of Brandon has other claims, rank and title, to support, and a noble and ancient family to perpetuate.” Augusta shook her head.

“Have you always had so invincible aversion to marriage, my dear niece?” asked Lady Glamore.

“It was always my wish to live single, my dear Madam.”

“Though once within a few hours of being married,” said Mrs. Wyndham.

“I told your Ladyship our charming Augusta had sustained some severe struggles. When she makes you her confidant, you will allow with me she has endured many.”

“And how ^{were} ~~was~~ you disappointed, my love? Could any man be inconstant to such a woman?” The mention of that sad event always affected Augusta, even to tears. She had with it annexed a thousand incidents, which never failed to rush upon her mind when that subject was touched upon.

“Forgive me, my love,” cried Mrs. Wyndham, “for thus giving you pain;” then turning to Lady Glamore, as they were going to the dinner parlour, “It was no inconstancy, it was a fatal accident which cost him his life; but we will drop the subject.”

When the party were again seated in the drawing-room, Lady Glamore began her recital, yet thought it proper to premise, with some apology to Mrs. Wyndham; but that Lady prevented her proceeding, assuring her none was requisite. “You have convinced me of the folly of hoping to have found a place in your dear brother’s heart, when he had become acquainted with the counter-part of our Augusta. My long attachment made me miserable; but had I known the lovely Maria, I should have acquiesced in my destiny with less poignant grief. Only consider me as one of your Ladyship’s auditors.”

“Well, then, we will drop all preliminary discussion. You know, my dear Madam, that the strictest

affection subsisted between Miss Stapylton and myself. We were seldom separate. The vicinity of her father's house to Aucland Lodge, where I resided chiefly with my grandmother, produced that intimacy in childhood, which ripened in the tenderest love as our years increased. Often used I to regret that we were of different persuasions in our religious tenets; but, as those controverted principles never made a part of our mutual conversation, they could not make any alteration in our sentiments for each other. My brother had seen her while a child, but never beheld her with partiality till she became almost an inmate of our house when I married. My Lord was of too gay a turn to domesticate himself, so that Maria, Lord Clinton, and myself, used to pass whole days together. Sir Thomas Stapylton wished Maria to take the veil, as her eldest sister had done, with a view of strengthening the family estate, which had suffered some derangement. This step she had always opposed, and therefore was far from being happy at home. It was natural she should prefer my society to that she met with in Yorkshire, where she was exposed to continual hard usage, and her parents were very indifferent about her, provided they were not obliged to furnish her expences. That part I most willingly took upon myself; as I was not of an expensive turn, and my allowance, by marriage settlements, quite sufficient for us both. She had heard of my brother's engagement, and not thinking of captivating any one, seemed to consider him only as my brother, and me she loved with the truest affection. It was a situation of danger to a young and susceptible heart. She checked not her increasing partiality for my amiable and too

charming brother, because she was not sensible there was any risk in esteeming a man who was destined to another. To behold such a woman every day, and to live in habits of fraternal intimacy, was likewise dangerous in the extreme.

I fatally urged him to continue with us from a selfish motive. My husband neglected me, and to these two dear friends I could unbosom my sad heart without reserve. I divided my time between them, and my infant son. His cruel father sought amusement every where but in his own house. A common interest seemed to unite us. At last, I believe, Lord Clinton found his danger, and hastily left us. The events of our lives are in the hands of a superior Being. We know not what would have been best for us. He had resolved to fulfil his engagements where honour called him; but alas! his heart was entangled. Maria sunk under an attachment she had not guarded against, and which had increased to the most alarming height before she thought herself in danger. Suffer me to pass all that part over in silence. When my poor brother returned to me, after being banished his father's house, and loaded with the bitterest execrations, too fatally prophetic and efficacious, what an affecting meeting was ours! Unable to remain in England, I forced upon him the half of my allowance to support them in Lisbon, where they went to reside with an aunt of Maria's, who had married, and was the widow of a Portuguese. How heart-breaking to me was the loss of their loved society, and the reflections I hourly made, together with my self-reproaches, for having been the means of their acquaintance, used to fill my heart with the

severest grief, as it had brought such wretchedness on themselves, and drawn upon me the severest anger of my father. Though possessed of the woman he adored, Lord Clinton was not happy. A consciousness of the injury he had done one of the most amiable of her sex, added to the curses he had brought on himself by this act of disobedience to his father, pressed on his bosom with unavailing anguish, and blighted all his joys, and when he found his wife was in circumstances to make him a parent, his dejection received an increase of power, from the idea that his child would inherit the same curses he laboured under; for my cruel father had likewise doomed his posterity in the same anathema."

"Oh!" cried Augusta, shuddering with horror, "how much of my former misery may I have owed to this unnatural parent! Cruel, inhuman, exertion of the power given by our Creator!"

"The abhorrence of my father," continued Lady Glamore, "to the Catholic persuasion made him denounce this curse on his posterity, apprehending that would be the only means of having the children of this fatal marriage brought up Protestants. He well knew the bigotry of the Stapylton family, and had a strong proof of the influence Maria certainly had over the mind of her husband; but through the interposition of our excellent Mrs. Wyndham, he was induced to offer some palliatives against the bitterness of his imprecation, and only denounced his vengeance on the devoted heads of Catholic children. My brother had ever loved and esteemed his father, and felt with anguish the total loss of his affection, together with the pangs from his self-accused conscience, that

he had merited his reprobation. Maria thought more lightly on it, because in her heart she believed her own faith to be the only saving one, and that neither the blessings or curses of an heretic could take effect. Such was the error of her education, and which had received more force by living among the most bigotted Catholics in a country, which is still less liberal in its religious sentiments than any other of the education of sons, my brother would, most undoubtedly, take charge : but yet their infant minds might be warped by the prejudices of a people among whom they were born, and nothing but the death of his father could enable him to return to England : nor was he himself free from danger. The most brilliant offers of affluence and rank were made him, if he would qualify himself to accept them, by conforming even so far as going to mass, and, with grief of heart, he beheld Maria every day more attached, and furnishing herself with fresh arguments of persuasion, to induce him to renounce the errors in which he had been bred, and become a member of the true church, and this she did from a tender motive, as she hoped then to convince him he had nothing to dread from the heavy curses of one who had no interest with heaven, or could expect his wishes to be fulfilled. All this I gathered from their correspondence, which was frequent, and was my only solace and comfort during our separation.

When I heard Maria was in the way to give a child to my brother, knowing the straitness of their circumstances, I prepared a present of every thing she would want in her *accouchement*, as well as for the infant, which, for my brother's peace of mind, I wished most sincerely might be a son, and therefore prepared the

whole of the child's dress as for a boy. I was obliged to be an œconomist, as I wished to be able to send them a bank bill to answer present exigencies ; and, having purchased the best materials to cloathe the expected stranger, my own woman and myself made all the various articles, and the caps, as I told you, were all my own work. How happy do I now think that circumstance, which was really the consequence of my necessity, since the identity of my beloved brother's heir is so incontestibly proved by it ! Maria laughed at my provision for boys only ; but I believe in her heart she wished to have a daughter. The reason was obvious, when we consider her increased attachment to her religion, which, by a constant residence among Catholics of the most rigid sort, had biassed her mind very much in its favour.

A letter from my brother informed me of his beloved wife being free from the peril and pain of childbirth, which had nearly cost her her life ; that he was sorry to tell me it was a girl.—His account was interrupted by the receipt of a letter from me, that acquainted him with the death of Lord Brandon.

He expressed a very natural grief for his having died without forgiving him ; but at the same time acknowledged the comfort he felt, in the assurance that the interdiction was taken provisionally from his offspring. He meant to return to his native country as soon as Maria could be safely removed, for the priests, and women of the family, had occasioned him great uneasiness, and had even attempted to steal the infant from him, that they might be secure of having it instructed in their pernicious doctrines, having actually by force baptized it in their form, which, it wrung

his heart with anguish to reflect on, his wife had connived at it; that he longed to breathe the air of his own country, uninfected with barbarous superstition and idolatry.—He by no means thought his own situation secure, since so many traps had been laid for him, and the terrors of death had worked so forcibly on the disturbed mind of Maria, that she had even joined with her relations in a kind of persecution against him. He was scarcely safe in thus writing his sentiments, but that they would be conveyed to the packet by a faithful hand; for some of the Catholics had instituted a process against him, which, however, would not have subjected him to more than a few day's confinement, even had it taken effect; but that it was evidently for the purpose of getting him out of the way, that they might secrete his child.

Another letter very soon followed this—to tell me he had arranged every thing for his departure, having obtained money for that purpose from the Ambassador; that every thing was carried on with the strictest secrecy on his part, and it gave me a sad foreknowledge of the increased influence of Maria's relations over her sentiments, when he told me he had concealed from her the mode he was constrained to adopt to effect his departure, as he was watched with the exactest scrutiny on all sides. He persuaded his wife to retire to a lodging some distance from Lisbon, for the benefit of change of air; but her aunt and the priest were to attend them thither. However, he had laid a plan to elude their vigilance, and, to avoid all suspicion of leaving the kingdom of Portugal, had actually been in treaty for a house and land in the

vicinity of Belem, near Lisbon. He had even been several times to mass, and suffered himself to appear less averse to discoursing on the subject of religion. His plan was to take passage in a vessel, ostensibly bound for the Brazils, but which, by bribing the commander, was first to convey him to England ; that he should, through the medium of a third person, get some necessaries on board, and then should prevail on Maria to take the benefit of a little excursion on the sea, for which purpose he had prepared a ship's boat, that they should accustom themselves to this sometimes, by way of amusement, and to prevent all suspicion, and that for security, he should always make the child one of the party.

In the last letter I ever received from my hapless brother, he told me the name of the Brazilian vessel was the *Nostra senora Madona de Dio*, and that in two days he should be on board her, and till he was safe in her cabin he could not, for prudential reasons, make Maria acquainted with his intentions of conveying her to England, Oh ! how affectionate were his expressions on the felicity of embracing me, and making my happiness the business of his life ! 'Alas ! I was doomed never to behold that beloved brother ! Yes, too surely, he perished ! My lovely mistaken Maria too ! But she would have renounced her superstitions when with us, had Providence allotted her return. " My love," she added to Augusta, who sat drowned in tears, " you must not suffer yourself to be thus overcome ; yet my own revived sorrow is almost too much to support. The events of human life are in the hands of our Creator, and we must resign to the hard decree, with a full persuasion that it was

right we should be afflicted, and that to answer some wise intent they were permitted. Most miraculously, and mercifully, was you preserved from the perils of shipwreck! Perhaps, your dear parents might have had their happiness interrupted by the mode each had adopted for your education. Perhaps, tenderness for the beloved mother might have wrought on your father to have resigned you to her; or, if he resisted, their lives would have been embittered by constant dissensions. Let us then look forward to brighter prospects, and adore that Being, who can turn our sorrow into joy. You lost your parents at an early period, and fell into the hands of those who executed every tender office to you in your infant state, making you, without knowing your origin, capable of filling it with honour. Oh! then, lovely Child of Providence, receive comfort, your beloved parents are at rest, and, by the mercy of heaven, I trust, in the most felicitous state; you, my nearest relation left of my family, have, in this short acquaintance, wound yourself into my heart, and I have the happiness to see the honours of my house descend in a right line to one so nobly accomplished, as to give the highest dignity to an ancient family."

Augusta, speechless with her various emotions, could only clasp her arms round the neck of Lady Glamore, and weep her gratitude on her bosom.

"Oh! what bliss," continued her aunt, "when I only meant to have done justice to your injured innocence, to find such an angelic creature the child of my brother! Yes, it is joy unutterable!"

Mrs. Wyndham wiped the tears, which had plentifully bedewed her face, and joined in the tenderest

congratulations to her beloved friend; and then most prudently would change the air of the conversation, lest, as it was growing late, they should retire to their several apartments with minds too oppressed with the various occurrences of the day, and pass a long night without sleep.

For a great favour, she suffered her daughters to sup with them, as their lively chat would serve to raise the spirits of herself and guests, or at least prevent their returning to the subjects that had so much engrossed their attention, and exercised their finest feelings.

CHAP. XXX.

NEW HONOURS PAINFUL.

THE long night proved a sleepless one to our heroine. She revolved the various circumstances of her eventful life, and forgetting the pleasurable scenes of infancy, wept over all that succeeded in her recollection; nor did the discovery of her parentage and family convey any soothing reflections to her mind. It was true she was of high rank, and possessed a princely fortune; but she felt herself wretched, and involved with new cares she would gladly have escaped from.

“How inefficacious,” she cried, “is the accomplishment of our wishes to the attainment of our happiness! Once ambition fired my young foolish heart, and it exulted in the hope of finding myself nobly

allied. Well, then, I am a Countess in my own right. I feel I am still the wretched Augusta Monckley. Alas! my pillow pays no deference to my title. Nay, perhaps, that very title renders it so uneasy to me. What will not be expected from the Countess of Brandon? The last of a noble stock, which she is called on to renovate. Had this discovery not taken place, the son of Lady Glamore would have been in possession of this estate. It might have made him happy—me it never can, for it deprives him of a right to which he has been bred.”

The image of this too charming relation returning in its most interesting form on her mind, made her sleepless bed too painful to be longer endured, she rose from it, lighted her candle, and attempted to re-kindle her expiring fire.—In deep meditation she sat beside it, till almost frozen with the cold, she was forced again to cover herself with the bed cloaths, where she lay shivering and wretched till she heard the servant (who lighted her fire) at the door. As soon as she had drawn the night-bolt, she eagerly asked if Mrs. Wyndham was up.

“I have but just lighted the fire, Madam; it is hardly yet day.” On hearing she was awake, Augusta threw on her petticoats and gown, and gently went to her bedside. “Will my beloved friend allow me to disturb her at such an unseasonable hour? I have not closed my eyes this whole tedious night.”

“My dearest girl,” she cried, tenderly extending her hand to take her’s, “you are cold as death! Come into bed, and warm yourself. Why these tears, my beloved Augusta?” And as she folded her to her

bosom, "Am I never to see happiness and joy in features, formed to embellish the most exquisite?"

Returning her friendly pressure :—"No, my dear Mrs. Wyndham, I much fear you never will. My soul does not feel as if it ever was to taste of peace ; and how should it, when the accomplishment of the most ardent wish of my youth seems so far from making me happy, that it proves, on the contrary, a continued source of wretchedness."

"Are you not of nobility? And have you not a great estate?"

"But do I not deprive another of that estate?"

"True ; but that loss may be qualified by a greater gain. Do you not love the man who has lost what he had no right to? And can you not restore it to him by giving him yourself?"

"Oh! my friend, if such a vain idea has gained a footing in your bosom, you have not attended to the conduct of Lady Glamore with that aching anguish I have. Scarcely has she mentioned her son. No, I am forgotten by him ; or, if remembered, only as one who has occasioned him grief of heart ; and when I appear under the form of her, who is to rob him of an inheritance he has long thought his own, in what a light will he behold me? So far from interesting me in his behalf, Lady Glamore seems to have lost all remembrance that he is her son. The aggrandisement of her own house, and its return to its natural heir, seems to take up all her thoughts. This day she will wish to hear my melancholy history! Oh! my beloved, most dear of friends, aid your Augusta, I beseech you. Suffer not my aunt to think that I have

ever felt an improper attachment (for it must be conquered) for her son. Let her remain in the belief, that to Henry's memory alone I dedicate all my life."

Mrs. Wyndham combated this false delicacy, as she stiled it, in Lady Brandon. "It may be so in any other case than my own, but you will allow my situation to be a peculiarly delicate one; and, indeed, I shall be for ever wretched, unless you will give me your sacred promise not to interrupt my narrative, which Lady Glamore will expect I shall give her this morning."

"Can Lady Brandon, or rather, can my beloved Augusta deviate from truth?"

"No, I will not. I do, from my soul, deplore the loss of my ever dear Henry. I only mean to conceal that I never loved him, as I have fatally, and to my heart's disquiet, found I have loved another. Her son may have informed her of the partiality he once entertained for me. It must be so, or surely she would have dropped some hints of him. If he has conquered such a partiality, shall not I attempt it at least? I, who have as noble blood in my veins as himself. Indeed, my dearest Mrs. Wyndham, you must not seek to alter my resolution," for she had uttered something disqualifying. "Give me your promise, and I shall be satisfied, never to mention the least circumstance to Lady Glamore, that you know any thing that passes in my bosom more than I shall relate to her. She is my near relation, and I honour her; but you—you are my friend, my second self, from whom nothing shall ever divide me."

"Well, then, my dear, and too romantic Augusta, I will hold your injunctions most sacredly. Your

mind is too much disturbed from this sleepless night : It is now but a little past eight—continue in bed—and try to compose your wearied spirits with refreshing sleep. I will not rise yet, and when I do, you shall not be disturbed ; rest will compose the severe agitation of yesterday.”

The mind of Augusta felt relieved from this little conversation with her friend, and balmy repose at length sealed her heavy eye-lids till near ten o'clock. She then rose more refreshed than she had felt herself a long time, and when she descended to the breakfast-parlour, she found Lady Glamore in the act of sealing a letter. On approaching to salute her, she saw the remains of a tear glistening on her cheek ; she saw, but would not notice it. Her Ladyship said, wiping it away, “ I have just written to my son. It was necessary to apprise him of my arrival, and the joyful events of yesterday. He has a noble mind, and will receive happiness from that circumstance, which has given such transport to his mother's heart.” A servant, for whom she was waiting, that instant came into the room.

“ If you have recovered your fatigue, William,” she continued, “ I would wish you to use all expedition in conveying this to Lord Glamore. He need not trouble himself to send express, the post is sufficiently quick, as I am in no haste to return. I shall be your charming friend's guest some time, my dear Lady Brandon, for I shall wish to see you established, according to your rank, at the Castle. Oh, heavens ! I little thought, when I came here, I should conduct thither its own mistress !

After they had taken their morning's repast, Lady

Glamore expressed her inclination to hear all Augusta could tell her of her history. Mrs. Wyndham silently heard Lady Brandon enlarge on the amiable character of Henry. Indeed, she spoke but the sentiments she always felt and avowed; but the consciousness of meaning to deceive her aunt made her blush and hesitate, which served to impress that Lady even with more than she had herself thought to do: but finding her go on without mentioning Lord Malvern, she said, "You have not told me when you became acquainted with my son."

Augusta strove to comprise her first interview with him in as few words as possible, and hurried it over, being fearful of trusting herself with so dangerous a subject. She never mentioned the times she had met with him in London, and those circumstances, which made so copious a theme when she related her narrative to Mrs. Wyndham, now scarcely took up five minutes. Her endeavour succeeded, and Lady Glamore gave the affection she bore to Henry's memory full credit, for being the motive of declining the addresses of Sir Maurice Morgan.

In as short a time as possible Lady Glamore received an answer from her son. From his heart he rejoiced with her on the recovery of her nearest relation. The loss of sixteen thousand a-year seemed trivial to him. Augusta received the benefit, and she was dearer to him than worlds. His letter was short. He made a constrained kind of compliment to his new cousin, and informed his mother he should dispose of the Malvern estate to pay off the arrears of that of Brandon; that then his patrimony would not admit

of his sustaining his rank in England, and he should prepare for his future residence on the Continent. This latter part of the information, which was the only one she heard, affected Augusta in the utmost extreme. Her emotions were too painful to be concealed, therefore she hurried out of the room to indulge them in their fullest luxury.

“These amiable young creatures,” Mrs. Wyndham could not help saying, “why should they be separated?” She almost feared she had broken her faith to Augusta, and stopped.

“Oh! Mrs. Wyndham,” cried Lady Glamore, “my son adores the lovely Augusta, and had she only been Miss Monckley, with what rapture would I have presented her to him, were her wishes consonant with his; but now, that we are barely doing an act of justice in giving her her own right with one hand, shall we extend the other to reclaim it from her? No, heaven forbid! I hope the affairs of my late Lord will not prove so desperate to make my son’s retirement an act of choice; but at any rate strict justice shall be done to Lady Brandon. Time may improve the acquaintance of two of the loveliest and most beloved of relations; my character demands I should be neuter in the cause.”

Mrs. Wyndham more than ever regretted her sacred promise to her young friend, as she apprehended, through a too refined delicacy, they would all bewilder themselves, till they had strayed so far from the road of happiness as to miss it entirely, when to her plain understanding it was straight before them, would they but consent to be led to it; but, faithful to her given word, she continued silent.

Augusta remained in her own room under the greatest distress of mind. At last she was determined that the resolution she had long taken should be known to him most interested in it; accordingly, summoning up all her remaining fortitude, she took her writing box, and with a trembling hand, but fixed heart, she penned the following letter to the Earl of Glamore :—

My Lord,

To enter into a detail of the most wonderful and unexpected events that have lately happened to me, were as painful as useless. Lady Glamore, my honoured aunt, has apprised your Lordship by what authority I am empowered to style her by so near a relationship. The same motives which once urged me to develop the mystery in which my origin was involved, and which, by its consequences brought such heavy misfortunes upon me, still actuate my principles. Neither wealth or honour were ever coveted by me. While my ever-beloved Mr. Monckley lived I wanted not; I wished for no change in life, and since his fatal and ever-deplored death, the small knowledge I had of the world, has contributed only to my disgust of it. Sheltered by his protecting arm, no evil could reach me : but while my tears were flowing over his loved remains, adverse fate overtook me in my defenceless state, and nearly plunged me into the abyss of destruction ! But who or what am I ? Enriched by an estate I never wished for, and enobled by titles which to me have no charms.

In a little time, a few years, perhaps not so much, as the struggles I have met with have broken my health, and all this shining dross must, according to lineage, be again restored to you. You have appeared in the world, and it has claims upon you, which it has not on me, because I am unknown to it. Of what consequence is it now that the title of Brandon should be revived in me, when, in a very few years, if my hopes are answered, it will again be extinct ? Never will it be perpetuated by me. Think not, then, my Lord, I make any, the smallest sacrifice, by offering that to you, I neither can or will consider as my own. Spare me the misery of beholding the amiable and beloved Lady Glamore, drooping to the grave for the loss of her son. I will not consign myself to abject penury ; two thousand a-year will be the highest affluence to her, who but a week since subsisted on the charitable bounty of strangers ; that I will accept from you : the rest is, must, and shall be your's. That income will support me nobly in the style of living I have chosen. I shall, while she remains to adorn the world, continue to live with Mrs. Wyndham. The tenderest friendship binds our hearts to each other. To re-urge my wish would, I trust, be needless ; it would imply a doubt of your Lordship's acceding to it, which would give me the sincerest sorrow.

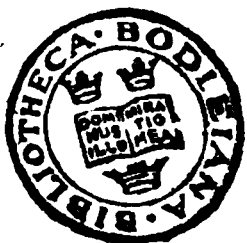
That you may long enjoy all the benefits of returning health, and every degree of happiness, is my ardent prayer ? and that your compliance with my fixed resolution, will be the means of lengthening the

life, and small portion of felicity, I am entitled to enjoy. I entreat you to believe,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most sincere well wisher,
and Cousin,

AUGUSTA MONCKLEY BRANDON.



The writing of this letter gave some ease to the oppressed spirits of Lady Brandon, and she rested on the hope that her wishes would be complied with. On her return to the drawing-room, she found Lady Glamore engaged in conversation with a venerable old man, who was introduced to our heroine as her steward at Brandon Castle. Mr. Price looked all astonishment and delight, to behold so charming an object in the child of his beloved young Lord, as he always called the late Earl.

“Oh! my Lady, I have lived long,” said he, “and have seen many melancholy days for more than twenty years past; but now all my cares are over. Blessed be heaven for prolonging my life to behold such a Lady! This is joyful, indeed! What rejoicings will there now be in the fine old castle, which has but echoed to the sighs of the abandoned family! How will the hearts of all the tenantry overflow with the same happiness as now fills my old eyes with tears of pleasure, when they behold such a beautiful angel whom they can call their Lady!”

Augusta would not check the rapture of the good old steward, by declaring the resolution she had taken of never looking on herself as mistress of the domain. Her reception of him was of that nature to conciliate his veneration of her manner, and highest regard for

the sweet sample she gave him of her merit : but when Lady Glamore mentioned some previous arrangements that would be necessary to her taking possession of her rights, she reminded her Ladyship, “ that she still wanted near two years of coming to age, and till that period she wished to remain with her friend Mrs. Wyndham, without any alteration being begun in the present establishment at the Castle. Two years,” she remarked, “ was a length of time which might occasion great changes. Young as she was, she had seen a great deal in a short time. Many a fallacious, and too much indulged, hope, ended in cruel disappointment. Adversity had made her, in some degree, a practical philosopher, and, although prosperity was a new trial, she trusted she should support it with an equal mind ; yet it was, in some particulars, liable to many drawbacks on the fancied happiness, which poverty annexed to it. Our pecuniary wants are frequently ideal, and few were but comparatively poor : but the art of knowing how to accommodate ourselves to our present circumstances, comprised the most useful knowledge.”

“ I allow the justness of your reasoning, my dear Lady Brandon,” returned her Ladyship, “ and listen with pleasure of the most exquisite nature, to the solid proofs you give of a mind guided by the strictest rectitude ; but never having had a guardian appointed, you are undoubtedly mistress of your own actions. United in blood as you are to me by so close a connexion, you can have nothing to apprehend from any claim being set up to invalidate your right of succession to my brother’s estate ; yet I should be better pleased to give the most public testimony of my regard

to his memory, by introducing, as early as I can, the heiress of his house and fortune. The friendship of Mrs. Wyndham (from whose society I receive myself too great a satisfaction to seek to divide you from such comfort) will, I hope, induce her to accompany us to London."

"To London! Oh!" cried Augusta, half breathless, "must I visit that hated place? A place where I experienced so much distress—where I was known, but to be despised!"

"It was because you was not known, my love: but when you are introduced as the Countess of Brandon, who will recognize you as one they have before seen in improper company? Come, my dear niece, you are too apprehensive, and, I fear, are of a nature to refine on sentiment, till you will hazard the loss of that happiness, which more common minds enjoy. Yes, you must be presented at Court; it is an etiquette that, with persons of rank, is absolutely necessary. I, myself, will have the honour of introducing my charming niece to their Majesties: it will be the highest honour that can be conferred on me. If my son should continue his resolution of going abroad for a few years, more, I am convinced, will not be necessary, you may if you wish not for *éclat*, reside with me in Portland-Place till you come of age, or are otherwise established."

Augusta sat almost motionless while her aunt was settling this arrangement. It was a torpid, not an acquiescent silence. Her head rested on her hand, and the tears stole gently down her cheeks.

To give relief to her young friend's anxiety, and to break a chasm in the conversation, which began to

grow alarming, Mrs. Wyndham said, " I had flattered myself I should have been honoured with the company of my noble guests some time longer, till after Christmas at least. Your dress, my dear Lady Glamore, as well as mine, precludes all appearance in public at present, and Augusta yet wears her mourning for her beloved Mr. Monckley."

" Why, that is true. My earnestness to publish to the world the treasure I have discovered, occasioned my overlooking the *sombre* habit I still wear: But after six months, and now it is above five since the death of my Lord, I may, so circumstanced, wave the otherwise impropriety of going to Court before the first year of widowhood is expired. Never can I be happier than in my present society, yet to the claims of the world something is owing, and we frequently sacrifice to ceremony those hours which are passed more delightfully in friendship."

The discourse was now broken in upon by a servant informing Lady Brandon, a gentleman, who had some time since the pleasure of being acquainted with her, requested the honour of being admitted to her presence on particular business.

" Who is it ?" asked Mrs. Wyndham, seeing the countenance of Augusta change from red to pale.

" Did he not send his name ?"

" No, Madam. He says, as soon as Lady Brandon sees him she will instantly recollect him."

" Do not be alarmed, my dear ; you shall not see him alone : you can have nothing to fear from any one. Desire the favour of the gentleman's company."

What was the astonishment that seized our heroine

when the gentleman was introduced, and she beheld the pert Mr. Peter Popkins make his entrée, with a thousand obsequious bows, yet with that forward impertinence, equally visible in his figure and address.

“ Give me leave, my Lady, to offer you my hearty congratulations on the good fortune that so unexpectedly has befallen your Ladyship.” This speech, which he had conned very exactly from the ‘ school of compliment,’ he delivered with the most satisfied air imaginable, hoping it would impress the auditors with a suitable idea of his polite breeding. Augusta bowed, but spoke not.

“ It is very surprising, faith ! Lord, Madam, how times are changed since I had last the pleasure of seeing your Ladyship !” and then he threw himself into a chair, crossing one leg familiarly over the other, adjusting his edged neckcloth, and putting his smart round hat under his arm.

“ You have taken a long journey, Sir,” said Mrs. Wyndham, thinking, as mistress of the house, she must say something to Lady Brandon’s visitor.

“ Oh ! my dear Ma’am, I think little of journies to oblige a friend.—You remember my old friend Ben, my Lady ?”

“ ’Tis not very likely I should forget Mr. Benjamin Monckley, Sir,” replied Augusta, with a frigid coldness.

“ Well, then, my Lady, it is on his account I have taken this tour into South Wales : But, egad, it is not well named, for I met with a cursed cold sleet from the North fall in my teeth all the way this morning : but as I was saying, my good friend Ben, who is as honest

a fellow as ever broke bread, though a little crusty or so, desires his kind respects to your Ladyship. He did, indeed, mean to write a letter, but you know he is no great penman, so, as it was a leisure time with me, and being glad of the opportunity of paying my compliments to your Ladyship, I e'en thought I might as well bring his message by word of mouth."

"You will then be so kind to give me as speedy an account of the message as you possibly can, being much engaged," looking at her watch, by way of hint, that it would please her to have this visit ended.

"Why, egad, you are always in a hurry, I think. I shall never forget the last time I saw your Ladyship running down the slope of the Terrace. To be sure I was in a provoking humour that morning. It was cruel, faith, for I plainly saw you wanted to get rid of me, and I was determined to have a little fun with you. I little thought any more than yourself what a great Lady you was : but how strange matters have turned out, and to think the handsome young stranger should prove to be your own cousin at last—that is the most marvellous of all ! Oh, God ! I shall never forget how mortified he looked when I affronted him, and prevented his following your *chay* !"

"Sir !" cried Augusta, anger and vexation boiling in her veins, "is this all your business ?"

"No, no, my Lady ; but the law, you know, is digressive."

"And its followers impertinent"—Augusta could not help saying to herself, and a good translator of eyes might have read her thoughts."

"My friend Ben says, he hopes, now you are a great Lady, and a Countess, with a fine estate, and

all that sort of thing, you will not bemean yourself so much as to think of that poor trifling sum that his brother left you. It is but as a drop of water in the main sea, ocean as I may say, and yet two thousand pounds to him is a great deal of money to pay from his own family to a stranger."

"Three lines would have conveyed this to me, Sir, without your having troubled yourself to have undertaken this long journey."

"Oh! my Lady, do not think of my trouble: I do not mind such things; they are mere *bags and tails* to me. When I have a devilish good horse under me I care for nothing; and I thought, perhaps," assuming a graver air, "your Ladyship might have some law business to settle, for I do not suppose these new relations of yours will give up their title and estate quietly." All the blood of the Brandon's rose in the face of Lady Glamore. She cast a look of the utmost indignation on the lawyer, who observed it not, but went on with his main purpose, which was to offer his services in the way of litigation.

"You have been misinformed, Sir, I can assure you; I have no law business to settle."

"Why, then, you are very lucky, indeed, my Lady; for as I find the old Lord died cursedly in debt, and the Malvern estate is advertised for sale, I would advise you to keep a sharp look out: however, if I have proffered my service in vain, you must excuse my zeal; for old acquaintance sake, I hoped your Ladyship would have had no objection to have employed me. Thank God, I have a pretty sprinkling of business; I need not force myself on any one. There is your old sweetheart, parson Bellamy. Lord!

how Ben laughed when he heard me tell him the story. You know, my Lady, how poor Ben hates the parsons."

"I should have thought," said Augusta, with conspicuous contempt, "the profligacy of Mr. Bellamy's character, so consonant to the stile of Mr. Benjamin Monckley's associates, would have insured his friendship, at least, for him : but I shall write to-morrow to your client, and acquaint him with my sentiments of his message." Saying which she rose, to give the impertinent Mr. Peter an opportunity of taking his leave."

"Then I will do myself the honour of calling for your Ladyship's letter, or wait for it," (glancing his eye on Mrs. Wyndham, hoping she would ask him to stay dinner at least) "just as is agreeable to you, Ladies. I am master of my own time, and am not obliged to fag at all hours." But no invitation following this broad hint, he went on : "I must tell your Ladyship about parson Bellamy. You know he has a develish turn for gallantry. I don't blame him, faith ! it would be very unfair in me. It is my own taste too much, upon my soul : but he did not set about the affair with caution ; so, as I was saying, just *poor passy litom*, he diverted himself with farmer Hodson's young wife ; but she had not been long married, and Hodson, you know, is a fine hearty lively young fellow, and fond of his wife, and so at present she did not want any other man to take notice of her : but the parson used to ply her very close with flattery, and all that sort of thing, that is agreeable enough to you of the fair sex ; but she was plaguy coy, and, in fact, told her husband that the parson

made love to her. He was determined to be revenged, so what does he, but bids his wife make believe that she was not so much contrary to his desires, but that she was afraid her husband should be jealous, when he found out that she had placed her affections on another man. Well, the parson was such a gudgeon, he took the bait directly—fell plump into the snare at once. An appointment was made, when the farmer was supposed to be out of the way, and, but I will tell you the story as decently as I can, for as I am retained by parson Bellamy, I know all the particulars. After drinking a glass to their better acquaintance, Madam left him to go to bed, and the parson was so eager to follow her, that he began to strip off his cloaths.”

“I wish, Sir, you would shorten your story, by putting an end to it.”

“Do not be uneasy, my Lady, I will not say any thing to shock you ; though I am gay myself, I have a respect for the Ladies. I am not now on my oath in court. Well, as I told you, he had almost made himself naked. ‘All loose, unbuttoned, and ready for violation,’ as the poet says, when, just as he was going to step into bed, with a thousand pretty fancies in his head, he felt a strong arm seize him, which never left belabouring him while he had any sense remaining to feel the blows. God! I can’t help laughing, neither, though it was too bad, faith: but he has brought an action of battery and assault against the farmer, and the farmer a counter action against him, so there will be pretty picking for the lawyers on both sides.”

“As I am engaged the remainder of this day, and

for some time to come," said Lady Brandon, "it will be needless to detain you. I shall write by the post to Mr. Benjamin Monckley. Mrs. Wyndham, will you allow me to order Mr. Popkins's horse! I wish you a good morning, Sir. My dear Madam," putting her arm within Mrs. Wyndham's, "I wish you to accompany me up stairs." She courtseyed with an air of haughty form to poor Peter, who bowed at every step he took. Mrs. Wyndham requested him to refresh himself, and bid the butler offer him what the house afforded. — Mr. Peter Popkins was of a disposition to make the best of every thing, and finding he could not obtain a footing in the parlour, sat down in the servants' hall, with the same grace and air of satisfaction he would have done if his bold push had drawn an invitation from the Ladies, and devoured cold ham and chicken with the utmost glee, swallowing bumpers of ale, which he preferred to wine.

"Well, Mr. Butler," cried he, "there has been a most wonderful change, indeed, in that same Lady Brandon since I first knew her, a little whining girl, subsisting on charity, and now converted into a Countess; though, faith, for that matter, she always had pride enough for a Princess. Lord of mercy! how old parson Monckley would stare, if he could pop up his head out of his coffin, to see the little squalling brat that lay on the sea shore gasping like a half-dying oyster, proved to be a Lady of quality—God, he would expect lawn sleeves from her Ladyship. I hope, though she will not be so stingy as to take the legacy he left her to the detriment of his own kin, that will be confounded hard, won't it, Mr.

Butler? And between you and me it will be a cursed disappointment to poor Pilgarlic, for I told Ben Monckley I would get her release, and he promised me a brace of hundreds for my bargain. I do not know how it is, but she is so haughty, that she puts me down like nobody."

The butler even was tired of him, so he said he was under the necessity of leaving him, but would recommend him to a very good house at Kidwelly, where he might put up for the night, and thought it would be prudent for him to endeavour to secure a room in time, as the place was much frequented. Mr. Popkins seeing he could not make a party in the house, very soon took his leave.

Lady Glamore disgusted with the impertinence of this strip of parchment, had left the drawing-room as soon as he had so imprudently delivered his opinion of Augusta's new relations. When she next saw her niece, "For heaven's sake, my dear Lady Brandon, who was that insolent fellow who broke in upon us this morning?"

"I never," answered Augusta, "was more provoked in my life. I could scarcely keep my temper from *downright abusing him!*"

"Oh!" cried Mrs. Wyndham, laughing, "I knew him at first, from the lovely description you gave me of the facetious Mr. Peter Popkins.—His coat cut to the quick—his cropped hair—his protuberant neck-cloth—and that bewitching round hat—what an enchanting figure!"

Augusta then related to her aunt her first acquaintance with the contemptible wretch, and just then

Griffith coming in to mend the fire, he informed them of his farther impertinence in the servants' hall.

"He will most certainly go without his reward," said Augusta; "for if there was not a poor person in the world to bestow my legacy upon, I would lock it up in a strong box to eternity, rather than it should be the reward of parsimonious brutality, or insolent pertness."

She took some paper, and wrote a letter for that evening's post, hoping it would arrive to Mr. Benjamin's hand before his friend Popkins.

To Mr. Benjamin Monckley.

"SIR,

"When the legacy, bequeathed to me by my most respected benefactor, Mr. Monckley, becomes due, I have directed my worthy friend, the Rev. Mr. Bendley to receive it, and give you the proper release.

AUGUSTA MONCKLEY BRANDON."

"And so much for Mr. Benjamin Monckley," said she, putting the letter into Lady Glamore's hand, who applauded the concise spirit with which it was written.

Just before dinner was announced, Mrs. Wyndham was called out of the room; it was to Sir Maurice Morgan. "I feared my abrupt entrance," cried he, as he took the hand of his aunt, "might overcome the spirits of your too lovely guest, and then I know I should have been more affected than becomes me to appear. But do you, my dear Madam, inform her I am impatient to pay my friendly congratulations on

his favourable turn in her situation. I shall detain your dinner hour only till I have taken off my boots, and had a little powder shook into my hair."

"More arrivals in our port, my dear Augusta," said Mrs. Wyndham, on entering. "Who is come now? Not a second Peter Popkins, I trust."

"No, indeed, quite another sort of man; one for whom you have a friendship, and who is contented with your friendship—my nephew."

"Sir Maurice Morgan. I shall, indeed, be happy to see him;" he instantly coming in. She even prevented the confusion he could not help feeling by the cordiality of her welcome.—"Give me leave to present Sir Maurice Morgan to my dear Lady Glamore. My honoured brother, I receive your congratulations with the sincerest pleasure. This, my dear aunt, was the champion of poor Augusta's traduced character. Why have you so long absented yourself from Wyndham Place?"

"Oh! I have been wandering about, seeking rest, and finding none, so I at last thought I might as well live in the view of heaven, as be a self-banished man. I hope, from my soul, my dear Lady Brandon, I see you perfectly happy. Ever since I have had the honour of knowing you, it has been my wish that you should enjoy that blessing unallayed."

"Your kindness in more than wishes, I have been used to experience, my good friend; and to see your health quite established gives me great pleasure."

"Why, yes, change of air sometimes does one a world of good when we know not of what to complain, and yet feel that all is not well within."

“ All will be well within, and without, I hope, my dear nephew. We are just going to dinner. You must take your usual post at the bottom of the table. Our party will now be complete.”

You might have had another beau, and quite a beau to what I am at present, for at Kidwelly I met a spruce dapper young gentleman : I was obliged to stop, for my horse had loosened one of his shoes, and while I was waiting at the farrier's, just on that hill which discovers this house. Pray, Sir, if I am not troublesome,” cried my spark, “ are you going to the great house you are looking at ? I answered in the affirmative. I am but now come from thence. I went to see a very fine girl I was formerly acquainted with. Not immediately recollecting any of your *demoiselles* being of that description, I stared at him never suspecting he could mean Lady Brandon ; but, not waiting a moment, he explained himself,—‘ Wonderful ups and downs in life—just like the face of this country, egad ! Who would have thought, when I first saw this Lady, she was a Countess ? Well, well, proud enough she was always, that's for certain : but I believe I know when she could not have given two shillings and six-pence for half-a-crown.’ Oh ! how I longed to lay my double thong across his lank shoulders. I disdained any answer. He was too contemptible for reproof. My horse's shoe being adjusted, I mounted, and barely touched my hat. ‘ Eh, Gad ! don't be too sure of a dinner where you are going.’ I rode off as fast as I could, as I felt my choler rising.”

“ We can be at no loss,” said Mrs. Wyndham,

“to know who your agreeable companion was ;” and then she told him in a droll way of their morning’s visitor.

Lady Glamore seemed more piqued by the impertinent insinuations of this puppy of a lawyer than the case merited. She had a high sense of honour, and could not bear it should be reflected on, even by objects, whom she in her heart despised : but it was a fresh argument with her, to urge Augusta to consent to her recovery of her father’s fortune and title being publicly known, which could be done by no means so well as her being presented at Court. Augusta, though she concealed her having written to Lord Glamore on the subject of renunciation, yet was determined to abide by it, and therefore could not be prevailed on to coincide with Lady Glamore’s sentiments ; but wished to postpone any conversation on the subject ; for which purpose she told her Ladyship she would petition for a great treat to amuse her, which was to hear Sir Maurice Morgan read a play to them after tea. Loving Augusta as he did, he found infinite pleasure in complying with all her requests, and jocosely requested Lady Brandon, as she had constituted herself mistress of the revels, to fix on what performance he should be the “Jack Pudding” of —. Mrs. Wyndham went with Sir Maurice to the library to get some volumes of plays.

“How amiable that young man appears,” said Lady Glamore ; “and it is plain to see how much he is attached to my charming Augusta. It would be a noble reparation to the former disappointment of the Morgan family, if the heiress of Brandon could behold him with the partiality he seems to merit.”

Augusta started, and turned pale.—“I allow him to be amiable, and acknowledge his merit, my dear Madam,” she said; “but I can do no more;” and then, with real anguish, though at the same time with a degree of dissimulation, for which she almost hated herself, added, “My heart is too deeply affected by the remembrance of him, whom I have for ever lost, to look forward to any other engagement.”

She charged herself with being dissimulating, yet she spoke the truth; but being conscious she meant to mislead the opinion of Lady Glamore, and make her believe it was Henry’s loss she thus deplored, raised the blushes on her cheeks while she spoke. Lady Glamore sighed; but the entrance of Mrs. Wyndham and her nephew prevented her replying, if she had intended to do so.

The next morning Sir Maurice took leave of the Ladies, with a promise of frequently seeing them while the amiable trio remained at Wyndham Place.

CHAP. XXXI.

AN UNEXPECTED VISIT.

THE transport of discovering Augusta, was an object worthy of his tenderest and most constant affections, had contributed more to the recovery of Lord Glamore’s health than all the *ars materia medica* that had been employed to effect that purpose. So disinterested was the love he bore her, that, as we have said, the loss of such immense property to himself was not felt in the scale, when poised against the advan-

tages resulting to her. When his mother was preparing for her journey into South Wales, he was anticipating the joys to which that visit might ultimately bring to himself, and pictured the life he probably should lead, in consequence of it, with the loved Augusta, with all the high colouring, which youthful fancy could paint in a mind naturally sanguine in its ideas, and ardent in its pursuits, when those pursuits were honourable.

The joy of finding Augusta the acknowledged neice of Lady Glamore, entirely destroyed every principle of self-interest in his bosom, and for a while left him insensible to every other idea ; but sober reflection told him, that an insuperable bar was now placed against his union with Lady Brandon. The most inflexible honour guided his heart, and that honour he found would lead him to wretchedness. How cruelly did he lament the perverseness of his fate, that prevented his mother making known his faithful attachment to the unprotected Augusta Monckley, and learning her sentiments, and, perhaps, obtaining her willing consent to be his, before she had discovered in her, the heiress of her brother, then he thought the most rigid censurer could not have greatly condemned him, if, when the important discovery had taken place, he had united his destiny to her's : but now, that the advantages were conspicuously on her side, not only that she was a Peeress of England in her own right, but that her large estate, so long ignorantly enjoyed by his family, and by the renunciation of which they were reduced to a very moderate income ; now, to avail themselves of her wealth and honours, and compromise an act of mere justice, and

which the law obliged them to comply with, by making her an offer of marriage, was a self-degradation to which his honour could not submit. Such were his sentiments when he answered his mother's letter, which contained this information. His patrimonial estates were all mortgaged to their full worth. The Malvern estate, which was near ten thousand a year, would scarcely pay the arrears, and many heavy debts were yet unpaid. Thus involved in pecuniary difficulties, he could suggest no other method of extrication, but to go abroad. At Geneva, where he had studied, he knew he could live on a very small income, and to that place he was determined to retire, till either he had cleared some of his estates, or what he thought would take a much longer space, had conquered a fatal attachment, which now, never, no, never, could be gratified, but with the loss of his integrity and self-esteem.

It is difficult to define what were his feelings when he read the letter Lady Brandon wrote to him : but to accept her renunciation, never took place one moment in his mind. His mind tortured with the knowledge which it conveyed to his imagination, that he had most fatally deceived himself in believing she had a tender regard for him ; for, industrious in tormenting himself, he applied all she had written of her beloved Mr. Monckley to Henry's share, and fancied her constant affection for that unfortunate young man had prevented her feeling those sentiments of attachment he had flattered himself she, in some degree, had entertained for him. This confirmation of her fixed love to the memory of Henry Monckley, served but to urge his speedy retreat to Geneva ; yet how

could he banish himself for years without taking leave of a mother, who merited all his duty and affection? It was cruel in the extreme, and would argue a weakness in him, for which he ought to blush: it would be but one struggle, and then all would be over. He had lost every shadow of hope—every prospect of happiness, and should he then not be equal to the task of bidding adieu to those friends who were dear to him? It was an unmanly imbecility to shrink from so necessary a trial of his fortitude, and might be construed into a mean surmise, that the loss of fortune had subdued his courage, and sunk him into a coward. He thanked his pride for suggesting such an idea.

“No,” cried he, “though I am wretched, I will not deserve to be so, by acting meanly. I will go to Wyndham Place—take a tender and duteous leave of my mother—with a composed and steady mind, congratulate my too-lovely cousin on the accession of fortune, that never could have contributed to my felicity, unless she had shared it. No, she shall never have cause to think meanly of the man whose highest honour would be to have been loved by her.”

He thought he would write to her. He began several letters; but tore each sheet, as soon as begun, not able to please himself. He then laid aside that plan, and contented himself with writing to his mother. To her he could open his whole soul, and tell her, under the seal of secrecy, how it doated on Augusta; but failed not to tell her likewise, in the strongest terms, how fixed his resolves were, not to avail himself of the generous offer and requisition of

Lady Brandon, to whom he begged she would say every thing consistent with the honour of her son.

“Remember, my dearest mother,” said he, “that honour is sacred. Never, I trust, will the fond partiality of the best of parents suffer it to be tarnished. Believe me, the hard necessity which bears me from you, presses not so nearly to my heart as the separation; but it must be done: comfort yourself, then, my beloved mother, that in the society of the amiable and lovely Lady Brandon, you will be amply repaid for my loss. She must love you, and every day she will prove herself more worthy of your love. I have armed myself with fortitude. I will soon follow my letter, to embrace you, and receive your blessing. You shall never have cause to blush for the weakness of a son, who glories in being descended from the most noble minded of women. I might sink into vain regrets; but I drive them from my mind, and only consider how I ought to act, not what I may, and do feel.”

All the heroism of Lady Glamore's spirit melted into tears of mutual affection, which saw itself going to be deprived for a mournful length of years from a son, who had ever been the prop and stay of all her happiness.—Hardly could the reflection that rigid honour demanded this sacrifice from her, reconcile her to the idea of so painful a separation; yet she rejoiced that the same independent principles glowed in the bosom of Lord Glamore as actuated her own. She gloried in her son, and that she might extract comfort from the fatal necessity that obliged him to quit his native country, opposed to the consolation of

having him always with her, the consideration of the contumely they should merit from the world, if they had acceded to the generous offer of Lady Brandon, or had urged a marriage between her and Lord Glamore, by way of keeping the wealth and honour due to her in their possession, who had enjoyed it so many years already unjustly, though ignorantly. Rather had she seen her son expire, than to live with shame and dishonour. She possessed the spirit of a Roman matron, yet still felt, within the deep recesses of her bosom, the tenderest love, and keenest anguish, when she told herself she should soon see this beloved son for the last time. All her struggles were to support herself with equanimity during this heavy trial, which, however, she would have died before she would have taken one step disgraceful, as she thought it, in opposition to the decrees of honour and justice.

Mrs. Wyndham was tied by her solemn engagement to Augusta, and therefore continued silent, though she much wished to have offered some qualifying medium, which, she hoped, would have been productive of more chance for mutual happiness, than their own refined sentiments were likely to occasion.

Lady Glamore gently reproached Augusta for having one instant believed her relations could be so lost to honour as to accept of her requisition.—

“No; you are the last of an honourable and noble house: in you it must be renewed. Think that the dying ashes of your beloved father rises from his watery grave, and calls upon you to perpetuate his name.”

Angusta felt chilled with horror, and pale as snow, sunk into the arms of Mrs. Wyndham, almost petrified by the solemn address of Lady Glamore. How freely would she have lost this honourable name, and exchanged it for the bitterest penury, rather than to be told the claims the world had upon her!

Mrs. Wyndham whispered to her, as she leaned her head on her shoulder: "Why will you not absolve me of my promise?"

"Never!" Angusta returned, in the same tone: "I am resolved what to do. I will combat, and support this weakness; but nothing shall urge me ever to marry."

This fixed determination being again made in her own mind, gave her a little strength, and she assumed courage to speak to Lady Glamore.—"Could my wishes have ended my existence, long since would the world have ceased to trouble me, and then the fortune and title of my unhappy father would have descended, or rather continued, where I wish it to be. I cannot enjoy it; the accession has made me more wretched, than I have found myself in any previous situation I have experienced through my varied life. The two thousand per annum, which I requested to have, I will allow myself to spend; but for the rest, it shall accumulate till my death, which I most fervently pray may not long be protracted. Happy—most happy shall I be—to resign a painful life, which a too refined honour, on the part of those I most esteem, have sealed with misery." Oppressed with the grief she felt in her almost bursting heart, she hur-

ried out of the room, and escaped to her chamber, giving way to her tears that flowed with bitterness.

“What can be done?” cried Lady Glamore :
“Must my family become extinct on both sides?”

“I see plainly,” answered Mrs. Wyndham, “you will all contribute to your mutual misery.” But fearing she had gone too far, added, “Let us suspend all conversation on this perplexing subject. I have still hopes the arrival of Lord Glamore will settle things in a more agreeable manner, than they at present bear the aspect of.”

“My son never can be so degenerated as to accept of a compromise,” said Lady Glamore. “You know not, my dear Mrs. Wyndham, the superiority of his mind.”

As the latter was restricted from speaking her sentiments, she thought she had better be silent, and waited with some degree of hope, that the interview between Augusta and Lord Glamore would be productive of some interesting situations, and that mutual happiness would subdue the phantom they seemed to have set up in order to terrify themselves, and mislead them into irremediable error.

Lord Glamore had put all his affairs into a train—having appointed persons to act for him in the sale of the Malvern estates, and to pay off, as far as he could, the annuities which his father had granted, and as every moment he remained in England, teemed with unavailing anguish, he felt a degree of impatience to get this soul-harrowing adieu over as soon as he could : he therefore set off for Wyndham Place the day after he had dispatched his last letter, and travelling with the utmost expedition, with his

mind alone supported by the consciousness of honour, he arrived at Kidwelly, and proceeded to Mrs. Wyndham's house but a few hours after the post had got there.

His long journey and recent illness had weakned his strength, and altered his looks. Pale and trembling, he could scarcely quit the chaise without support, and the eagerness with which he wished to get over this mournful exertion of his fortitude, was the only means which enabled him to sustain himself. Augusta had left her chamber, and retired into the library; nor till Mrs. Wyndham came thither to her, did she know of the arrival of Lord Glamore. Mrs. Wyndham had the marks of grief on her countenance very visible when she entered the room. Augusta most tenderly enquired what had afflicted her?

"It would be selfish," said Mrs. Wyndham, "to impute it all to my own feelings: but to see the express image of your beloved father, and not feel a revival of sorrow, is impossible; yet my bosom is likewise pained to extremity, by beholding the distress of others."

"Oh, my God!" cried Augusta, "is then Lord Glamore come?"

"He is; his chaise is at the door. I pressed him, as well as my emotions would allow me, to have the horses taken off. No, my dear Madam," said he "they may move about—I shall stay but a very short time. Alas! his countenance is as melancholy as that of my beloved Clinton, when he too was driven into banishment."

"But this is a banishment of choice," said Augusta, who seemed as if she wanted to strengthen her mind, by throwing some blame on his Lordship. "It

is clear he feels not any partiality for me. He would have written, if only to take a formal leave, but his pride is invincible."

"It is a family failing, I think," said Mrs. Wyndham, "and in which he does but copy the example of his fair cousin."

"Do you, then impute an improper pride to me?" asked Augusta, inly piqued at her friend's harsh opinion.—"Are you not cruel, my dear Mrs. Wyndham, in your assertion? Wherein have I shewn pride? Would you have had me offer myself to the acceptance of one, who prefers every inconvenience rather than be obliged to me? No, I hope I am not unreasonably proud, but nothing shall make me mean; my present misery is happiness to such an expedient."

"Well, if you will not allow me to think you have pride, I hope you will give me leave to repent most sorely the promise you extorted from me, not to disclose the tenderness you have so long entertained for Lord Glamore: but you will see him, will you not?"

"Oh! why should I expose myself to so severe a trial? And yet, if I refuse, it will bear the supposition that I dared not hazard an interview. Yes, then," half breathless, "yes, I will convince him I have some fortitude; but, perhaps, he does not wish to see me. What shall I do? How I wish this day over; for then, I am certain, no events of human life can ever interest my feelings any more." Mrs. Wyndham, who wished most heartily that this interview should take place, flattering herself with the most felicitous consequences from it, encouraged our

heroine to support herself with all the magnanimity in her power.

Lord Glamore had taken a most affectionate farewell of his mother. — Not a word escaped from the lips of either of any idea of accommodation; their hearts had not even suggested it. He wished her to introduce him to Lady Brandon; but the tumult of grief she felt, on embracing her beloved son for the last time, overpowered her so much, that she was forced to decline that etiquette. The fond mother alone possessed all her soul, and ceremony sunk in the agony of her mind.

Mrs. Wyndham attended the summons, and the rising hopes which filled her bosom, though she concealed them carefully from those who were so much interested, gave her courage to meet Lord Glamore, and present him to Augusta. She rose at his entrance, though almost ready to sink to the floor. Mrs. Wyndham said something, but what she hardly knew herself, and certainly what she did say was but little attended to by her auditors. He approached the table, on which Augusta leaned her hand to give a little more steadiness to her frame, and, with a voice of tremor, paid some congratulatory compliments on the recovery of her health, and the honour which his family had received by such an acquisition of merit and excellence. Mrs. Wyndham left the room, and Augusta looked after her, as if, in losing her reviving presence, she had lost all her support. She made some hesitating answer, and begged his Lordship to take a chair, and, endeavouring to assume some little composure, she said, “She was extremely sorry to find he had adhered to his resolution of quitting

England. She had hoped the explicitness with which she had declared her determination, might have made such a step unnecessary for the sake of his mother."

"To part with such a mother," he said, "was a heavy affliction to him; but only could be supported by the reflection that he had had still greater to struggle with; he had lost every thing that could make life desirable before, and had prepared his mind to bear this with, he hoped, some degree of fortitude. But I intrude on your time, Lady Brandon." His breath grew short, and he visibly laboured to conceal the perturbation of his spirits. — "I should have intreated your forgiveness, for the violence of my temper, the last time I saw you; but, I believe, you will one day know, that my punishment has borne proportion to my offence."

"I beseech you, my Lord, do not say any thing about it. I have long forgiven it, and I too was much to blame in that fatal interview;" the remembrance of which subdued the air of pride she had endeavoured to sustain herself by, and the tears forced themselves from her eyes. He, exceedingly affected, rose immediately.

"I cannot stand this," he cried: "I ought not to have exposed either you or myself to these emotions." He took her passive hand, "May every happiness be your's! Adieu, Lady Brandon! Adieu, most lovely Augusta!" His voice choaked with sobs, would not allow him to proceed; he hurried from her, but stopped a moment in the door-way, to gain a little strength, that he might recommend his mother more particularly to her care and attention. Augusta believed he had retired from the room the moment

he ceased to speak ; and now thinking herself alone, she gave way to anguish which almost destroyed her, and, bending her head over her clasped hands, exclaimed, " Oh ! then he is gone, and left me miserable for ever ! "

" What do I hear ? " cried Lord Glamore. " Is Lady Brandon miserable ? And will you," approaching her, and drawing the chair close to the table, " will you, oh ! Augusta, by driving me from you, make yourself miserable as well as me ? And must I bear with me to foreign climes, the wretchedness of knowing that you are unhappy likewise ? "

" Alas ! my Lord, how can I be otherwise ? But do not say I drive you into exile : No, it is your own persevering pride of independence banishes you, and to that you sacrifice the happiness of your mother, Augusta, and yourself. To that phantom you have raised the altar on which our united misery is sealed. "

" And yet," said he, " Augusta could, with one word, change the scene of this misery to happiness. "

" Oh ! then teach me that one word of such magic influence," she replied, looking on him, with her eyes flowing with tears, " how gladly will I repeat it ! "

" Then" said he respectfully taking her hand, " say, then, that you will be mine. "

" What ! " she returned " will you accept the hand of Augusta ? You, who steadily refused the slightest mark of her regard ! You, who would consign yourself to comparative indigence, rather than receive the wealth she could not enjoy ? "

" Oh ! my beloved Augusta, rather say I would accept of all or nothing ; the wealth of the world

would be but splendid wretchedness without you to share it. Possessed of your love, my happiness would be too complete to waste one thought on whose side that wealth might be. No, in you, and you alone, would all my felicity be centered. It was not pride, but despair that drove me from you : both will vanish instantly, if my adored, my lovely Augusta, would consent to be irrevocably mine, and restore all the lost happiness of her faithful Glamore."

"And will my consent make us all happy?"

"Oh! can my angel doubt it?"

"Then most willingly does Augusta accord that consent; and may the weight of anguish I have so long felt, and now feel relieved from, be an earnest of that happiness, that will ensue from my free consent, to be your's for ever!"

"Oh!" cried Lord Glamore, kissing the hand he had for some time held between his, "what a reprieve from the agony of despair to the most ecstatic joy! Now I may again see my beloved mother, and make her happy with this unlooked-for, this unexpected, most delightful, intelligence! She shall thank my Augusta. My full heart, throbbing as it is with grateful love, will not allow me words: Such a transition! Oh, God! it is too much!" He rose and went to the window; his overcharged bosom relieved itself by tears. In a minute he returned to her, whose eyes had sympathized with his, and, putting his arm round her waist, "How weak must Augusta think me? But reflect how suddenly I was raised from despair and anguish, to life and happiness."

“It is not, I hope, an unamiable weakness,” said Augusta; “but, if it is, I have shared it with you.”

“My beloved angel,” he replied, “I owe all my happiness to you; but let me not be selfishly so. Let not compassion for my sufferings influence you to make me happy at the expence of your own feelings. None can fall to my share, unless your consent arises alone from mutual affection.”

“What can my Lord mean?”

“Oh! my Augusta, have I no rival? Even in the grave I should dread a rival, and should envy the dead who should draw tears from your eyes. Perhaps I refine too much. But what anguish did your letter occasion! It was that which drove me to the determination of leaving England.”

“My letter! Pray explain yourself.” He drew her letter from his pocket-book, and pointed to the tender expressions she had used in writing of her grief and affection for Mr Monckley.”

“Alas! my father—my more than father—my loved benefactor! Surely you will allow me to embalm his memory with my grateful tears, nor seek one jealous pang for the love I must ever bear him?”

“Your father! Was it, then, of the old Mr. Monckley you thus expressed yourself? I thought, and till this moment feared, you had meant that Henry to whom you were so nearly united.”

“Perhaps you will blame me, my Lord, for having consented to an union with the unfortunate Henry, when my heart was a stranger to that affection which should ever be its basis? I loved Henry as a brother, even to the latest moment, preceding that which was to have united our hands, my love was no more; I

should have been happy to have seen some other woman the object of his choice. I found, however, that he would be miserable from my refusal, and that my consent would make my generous benefactor happy: could I then, the child of his adoption, hesitate, when I had never seen any one I could prefer to Henry? My own wish had ever been for a single life, without being able, by comparing him with any other, to judge why my bosom felt not a return of affection, I yet found I could not bestow mine upon him: but I owed every thing to his beloved father, and gratitude prompted me to conquer my unjustifiable repugnance to make them happy. I wished to postpone the marriage till I came of age, and fear I had a latent hope, that the vivacity of Henry's temper would occasion a change in the object of his present attachment, and seek happiness with one who could feel a mutual regard for him: I feared, indeed, my heart was as cold as he frequently reproached it for being: but I have been long convinced, the love I bore him was that which an affectionate sister bears an amiable brother."

"And how was my sweet Augusta," asked Lord Glamore, smiling, "convinced that it was not a natural coldness of heart that prevented her returning Henry's love?"

"Oh! there was no sympathy between us. Our minds were not congenial, and till I met with such a mind, my heart remained cold and insensible."

"And have you yet met this counter-part?" said he, looking fondly in her face.

"That is a question?" returned she, smiling, "I will not yet answer you."

“What a wretch am I,” said his Lordship, rising, “not to fly to my mother, and acquaint her with this blest reverse of fortune. Oh! how shall I find words to speak my bliss?”

“We will go together, my Lord. Let me be a sharer in the general joy.” The enraptured Glamore seized her hand most willingly, and thus he led her to the drawing-room, where he found Mrs. Wyndham and Lady Glamore, the latter still weeping the loss of her son. “My God!” exclaimed she, on seeing the highest glow of joy animating the features of Lord Glamore, and the sweet smile of satisfaction illumine the beauteous face of Augusta, “what does this mean?” Lord Glamore made but two steps from the door to the arms of his mother.

“Oh!” cried he, rapturously pressing her to his bosom, “may these be the last tears that shall ever bedew the face of my beloved mother! This is the angel,” taking the hand of Augusta, “who brings happiness to us all.”

“Oh! blessed be this interview,” exclaimed Mrs. Wyndham, “my hopes are answered!”

“But, by what means?” asked the delighted mother.

“My loved—oh! how long-loved Augusta, has consented to bless your happy son with her hand.”

“And make herself happy,” interrupted Mrs. Wyndham. “Now, Lady Brandon, I am released from the interdiction laid on my poor tongue, which longed, for the mutual happiness of us all, to discover your secret attachment to this nobleman.”

“My dear Mrs. Wyndham!” cried the blushing Augusta, putting her hands together, as if praying

she would not say any thing. "Oh! now we are all the happiest people in the universe. I will not mind your supplicating looks and actions. Can you wish that charming young man should for one moment, doubt that he has long been dear to you?"

"Heaven forbid he should!" returned Lady Brandon, most candidly: "no, I will here avow: but do not look at me," she said, with a sweet and natural confusion, "I do in this presence declare that, from the first hour I beheld the amiable stranger I met on the Beach, my heart in secret vowed no other should ever obtain my hand. Oh! my dearest Lady Glamore, in your arms let me hide my blushing face, and receive a sanction for my bold confession." Lady Glamore pressed her with maternal affection to her bosom, while her happy son, folding his arms round them both, poured forth his gratitude to heaven, and his adored Augusta, who had thus rendered his heart so perfectly assured of the reality of his happiness.

The post-boys, who had been driving round the court-yard all this time, half frozen with the cold, were now ordered to put up, that themselves and horses might partake of refreshment. Every thing was a source of joy ineffable to the happy Glamore. The seeing the chaise go out of the gates affected him almost to tears, so sensibly did he prove the alteration of his feelings since he had quitted it. A new soul seemed breathed into our heroine. The peace which had for many years been a stranger to her bosom, or only visited it at short periods, now seemed to have taken up its abode there, and glowed in every feature of her expressive face. Never had

she appeared so lovely as that evening. She was modestly cheerful; but the radiant animation which embellished her countenance, made her almost superior to mortality.

CHAP. XXXII.

THE MANSION OF PEACE:

Of which the most lovely countenance of Lady Brandon the next morning seemed the beautiful symbol. The various sorrows that had oppressed her for more than the last four years of her life (dating, her first acquaintance with grief, from the period of Mr. Monckley's relation of the deplorable accident which had thrown her on his care) had damped, but not destroyed the sweet vivacity, chastened by delicacy, the most feminine and bewitching, that was natural to her disposition. Now, that she felt herself truly happy, did that natural disposition evince itself by heavenly smiles, and lively conversation. Her music had been only kept up, by her desire of improving the Miss Wyndhams in that charming accomplishment; but as they had not discovered good voices, she had intirely neglected her singing, which she did in a most capital style. She used to say with the captive Israelite, when requested to unite her voice with her rapid fingers, "Alas! how can I frame my heavy heart to sing?" But joy having ren-

dered her wakeful, she came down into the breakfast room much earlier than usual, and the lightness of her spirits induced her to seat herself at the grand piano-forte; from whence she drew forth sounds the most harmonious, and warbled forth a tender lay of Jackson's, in notes so sweet, as might "entrap the soul, and lap it in elysium."

Pleased to find she had not from disuse, lost those powers which afforded her so much entertainment, she was too much engrossed with mental delight to hear the door gently open, and Lord Glamore, as gently as foot could fall, enter the room. He stood almost entranced, while listening to the elegant taste, and correct shake, with which she ended a *bravara* part she had herself introduced in the *da Capo*.

"Will you forgive me," cried he, "for breaking in upon such an angelic minstrel?"

"It is the first time, for more than eight months," she answered, "since I could find one hour in which I had spirits to sing."

The animated look, with which she pronounced this, told him as much as volumes could have done of his own perfect happiness. How tender and delicate, and how congenial to her own sentiments, were his expressions of love and gratitude, to see so much loveliness of form before him, might justify the elegant compliments he could not help paying to her, and, above all, the expressive glow that spoke in her intelligent features, which gave the sincerest joy to his heart.

"Oh!" said she, sweetly smiling, "The roses will bloom when there's peace in the breast."

"May thy lovely bosom ever be the Mansion of

Peace," he replied. With a lively air she opened her book at that very song, and sung it to him with so much pathos and tenderness, that completely made his heart its mansion too. The Ladies made their appearance before it was ended, and, as soon as they had breakfasted, Lady Glamore proposed, as the morning promised to be fair, that they should pay a visit to Brandon Castle.

"You cannot now object my love," she said to Lady Brandon, "to be introduced there as its mistress."

"And, I believe," said Mrs. Wyndham, smiling, rather archly, you will not be more willing to resign your title to it, than my young friend here will be ready to accept it."

"No," said Lord Glamore, "I find a few hours make a wonderful alteration in a man's resolution; but I will not recur to the sad sentiments which yesterday pervaded my whole system. Now," tenderly taking the hand of Augusta, and fondly looking on her, "now, I would accept it this moment."

"Oh! you are too impatient to be Lord of the domain. I have not yet given myself a right to dispose of it, nor shall I ever consider it as mine: no rather let me receive every thing conducive to my happiness from you—and you—and you"—giving her hand severally to his Lordship, and the two Ladies.

The party was soon arranged.—Mrs. Wyndham, however, declined going. She excused herself from the motive of waiting to receive Sir Maurice Morgan, who she expected to dine at Wyndham-Place that day. Augusta looked at her, and gave a tender sigh. Mrs. Wyndham observed it; but taking her hand,

and lifting it to her lips, as she impressed a kiss on it, while her eyes glistened with a tear of sensibility and gratitude—"How amiable is my loved Augusta! My generous friend, I will visit the Castle most willingly, when you have settled between you who is to be its legal possessor; and the first hour you tell me Lord Glamore is so, that shall be my signal for approach, so remember it all depends upon you."

"Charming Mrs. Wyndham!" said his Lordship, gaily: "how happy is it for a man, too modest to speak the ardent wishes of his heart, to have so potent an auxiliary, who has at the same time all proper influence over the governess of the citadel."

"And this is the return," cried Lady Brandon, laughing, "you make the amiable, generous Augusta! Is it, my dear friend?"

"Oh, she answered, "I believe I shall feel my youth renovated with the return of cheerfulness. How many, many years have I passed without feeling myself so happy as I do now! From the first hour I saw this dear girl," she continued, addressing his Lordship, "my heart seemed to assimilate towards her, as if she had been my own child; and you will find, to your lasting happiness, my Lord, that the more you know her, the better she will merit your love. I now wonder not at that sympathetic fondness I instantly experienced for her. My heart understood, though my reason knew it not, that she was the offspring of the only man I ever loved in my life: but when I have been likewise told, that she is the exact counter-part of her lovely mother's form, could I blame him? Look at the difference between the objects," she said, as she stood with Augusta before

a large pier glass: —“ Could I wonder that he should turn his eyes from such a woman, to fix them on an angel ?”

“ Oh ! had my beloved unhappy father looked into the heart of my dear Mrs. Wyndham, what inestimable beauties would he have discovered ! Surely superior to the tincture of the skin !”

“ Then how happy is my fate,” cried Lord Glamore, when I can say, I may soon possess a heart the most excellent, inshrined in the form of an angel.” The post coach came to the door, in which Lady Glamore, Augusta, the two girls, and the happiest of men, seated themselves for their morning’s excursion.

When they arrived at the Castle, little Louisa, who was of a sprightly disposition, and a great favourite already with Lord Glamore, catching his hand, said, “ I will show you the picture of a gentleman that was to have been my papa.” When coming up to it, she lifted up her hands, with the air of the sweetest *naïveté*, “ why it is you ! It is your picture ! What ! was you to have been my papa ? Ah ! I don’t wonder now that Miss Monckley, that was, loved to look at it so. Ah ! Lady Brandon, don’t you remember ?” shaking her little head significantly.

Lord Glamore’s attention was called off from the prattling Louisa, by seeing the big tear trembling in the eyes of Augusta, and her bosom heaving with convulsive sobs. The reflection of her father being banished with such harsh cruelty, from the house which she was going to take possession of, overcame her, and she was very near in an hysteric fit. Lord Gla-

more ran out of the room for a glass of water, and, hastening to her with the most supplicating tenderness, begged her to drink it. His eyes, expressive of the fondest concern, were bent upon her, as he applied some volatile salts, which his mother had taken from her pocket.

“It is very weak,” said Augusta: “I know it is,” striving to conquer the emotions which had so much affected her: “I shall soon recover; indeed, I am better.”

“My lovely angel!” said her tender Glamore, “indulge this soft sorrow, at once so natural and amiable, your gentle heart will be relieved.” Thus soothingly he talked to her, in which style Lady Glamore joined him, and most salutary did Augusta find this little vent to her overcharged bosom. By this time the old house-keeper, who had been changing her gown and cap, when she had first heard of the arrival of her new Lady, came into the room, where the Ladies were seated on a sofa, and Lord Glamore leaning over the side of it next which his Augusta sat. She was preparing a compliment to accompany her courtesys, when seeing in the person of Lady Brandon the beautiful young creature who she so perfectly recollected, she looked all astonishment and delight.

“I told you, my good woman, when I was here before,” said Lord Glamore, “that probably I should soon order the Castle to be put into repair. My fond wishes then prompted me to hope I should present this lovely angel to you as its mistress.”

“And is not that Lady Brandon, then, my Lord?”

“Most assuredly! But instead of my making her

the mistress of the Castle, she has promised soon to make me the master."

"O blessed will be the day!" said the old house-keeper: "I shall think my dear Lord alive again."

Lord Glamore willing to change the scene a little, and draw Augusta from the seat, where she continually fixed her eyes mournfully on her unhappy father's portrait, pressed her, after taking some refreshment, to walk with him into the garden. Lady Glamore chose to remain with the house-keeper, whom she had not seen for above twenty years, and the girls were busy eating some cakes.

The gardens were spacious, but laid out in the ancient style, conformable to the structure. The morning, though frosty, was clear and temperate. How charming did the time pass to the happy Glamore, while his beloved Augusta leaned upon his arm, and pleased, listened to his agreeable conversation. With candour and sincerity all her own, did she, at his request, lay her whole soul before him, chasing away every doubt that anxious and faithful love, naturally timid, will sometimes entertain. Such minds, so rationally, so permanently, attached to each other, it was impossible should think of the lapse of time: nor, till Lady Glamore sent to remind them, that they should not reach Wyndham Place till too late for dinner, did they know they had been five minutes together.

Mrs. Wyndham's sole purpose of remaining at home that morning was, indeed, to prepare her nephew to receive Lord Glamore as the avowed lover of Lady Brandon. Not to have felt a pang truly severe, would have proved Sir Maurice something

more or less than man : but he sustained the shock with proper fortitude, and, aided by the goodness of his understanding, and excellence of his heart, armed himself to meet so aimable a character as his aunt drew of his Lordship, rather as a friend, who had made the beloved Augusta happy, than a rival, who had prevented his being so. To be the second man in the esteem of Lady Brandon, he thought a pre-eminence superior to being the first with any other woman in the world ; and, on the other side, Augusta had made such honourable mention of Sir Maurice Morgan's disinterested regard for her, in undertaking the vindication of her aspersed character, even after he had so nobly acquiesced in her refusal of his addresses, that Lord Glamore was impatient to take him by the hand, and commence a lasting friendship with a man of such worth.

Thus well-disposed to each other, no appearance of rivalry could be discovered. The delicate attentions which Lord Glamore shewed Augusta, evinced only a marked preference, without that ostentatious officiousness which favoured lovers so often display, and which is so distressing in general to its object.

Elegant, lively, and improving conversation, accompanied their table ; and when the Gentlemen joined the Ladies in the drawing-room, and had taken their tea, Augusta proposed, for the amusement of the party, that Sir Maurice and Lord Glamore should read a play to them, dividing the characters, the better to preserve the discrimination of each.

“ I think,” said his Lordship, “ I can provide a still higher pleasure ;” and, turning to the Baronet, added, “ by chance, this morning, I heard some of

the sweetest notes. Will you, Sir Maurice, unite your entreaties with mine, that Lady Brandon will suffer us to lead her to the piano?"

"Well, then, between the acts I will endeavour to amuse the audience." But when the time came for her share in the evening's entertainment, no other could be thought of.

She played a concerto of Pleyel's, and then sung that elegant air of,

"For tenderness fram'd in life's early dawn,"

with so much justness and taste, that her hearers were delighted, and bore testimony to the melting harmony, by the effect it had on them. The sweet plaintiveness of the notes, corresponding with the beauty of the words, gave those exquisite little breaks in the voice, that render the tones so pathetic.

"And this you call pleasure?" said Sir Maurice, dashing away a tear that was straying down his cheek. "We must allow it is of a refined cast. Do now, my dear Lady Brandon, give us an air *a la comique*."

She was ever in the disposition of obliging, and sang them several songs of a more sprightly tendency. Thus delightfully did a whole week pass that Sir Maurice remained with them, and long before the end of that period, so charmed was he by the elegant manners, the excellent understanding, and, in short, the *tout en semble* of Lord Glamore, that he openly pronounced, "If a mortal could deserve the charming Augusta, his Lordship was the man."

"Some poor disappointed fellows," cried he, in

the most perfect good humour, "if they had not courage to shoot or hang themselves, would have moped like an owl in the sun-shine, and never have known the delights of elegant society as I have enjoyed here, where, I trust, I have begun a friendship which, unless I am very unfortunate, will sweeten all my days."

It was impossible to know Sir Maurice without esteeming him, and that sentiment he inspired most abundantly in the bosom of Lord Glamore. They agreed the following week to go to London together, as there were many things that his Lordship, in particular, was very anxious to have begun, that the completion of his happiness might be perfect.

"Indeed," answered Sir Maurice, "I shall most cordially add every service in my power to put affairs in a proper train; and, if Lady Brandon will allow me the honour, I shall have a singular pleasure in presenting her hand to you at the altar."

Lord Glamore snatched his hand, with the most lively gratitude, and pressed it to his bosom, to speak his thanks of this most generous offer of friendship.

Augusta, with a sweet rosy blush, looked her grateful acknowledgments; but said, "if you can settle it with my dear and worthy old friend here," taking the hand of Dr. Watkins, who was present; "for to him I have the highest obligations: he would have adopted the orphan Augusta."

"No, no," cried the good old man, with his usual pleasant smile, "I am too young for the office. I have bespoke a pair of pumps to lead off the bride in a dance, and figure away as one of the bridesmen;" and he caught the hand of Augusta, and twirled her

round the room with the utmost vivacity; and then putting her hand into that of Sir Maurice, "now, my noble friend, you may dispose of her if you please; and, I believe, you are so well assured it is the mutual happiness of us all, that you should present it to Lord Glamore, that you will not hesitate to bestow it directly."

The pleasantry of the old man diverted them highly: indeed, he was the delight of all societies; for every one that knew him preferred his company before all others.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

A CORRESPONDENCE being kept up with Mr. Bendley and the younger Wyndhams, they were desirous of paying a visit to Wyndham Place, and self-invited, they arrived there about the time of Lord Glamore's return from his London expedition. The addition of Mr. Mrs. and the youngest Miss Bendley, with Mr. and Mrs. Edward Wyndham, and their suite, increased the family rather too much, which made Sir Maurice offer his house for the young people. Fanny Bendley, who was a charming girl, of the same age as Augusta, went with her sister to Morgan House.—Amelia Bendley could not conquer the dislike she still entertained for her innocent rival,

and declined accompanying the rest of her family: But Lady Brandon, willing to conciliate her good opinion, though her friendship she was not desirous to obtain, empowered Mr. Bendley to transfer the two thousand pounds, as soon as it was due, to the sole use of his eldest daughter.

“My dearest Lady,” said the worthy man, while the tear of a father, wounded by the unpleasant temper of a child, trembled in his eye, “you should not do thus; my poor Amelia does not merit such generosity from you.”

“If then from me,” she answered, “it would not be as freely accepted, as disinterestedly offered, let it be a present from yourself: to your use I devoted it, as soon as Providence showered its many blessings on me.”

Lord Glamore had set many springs in motion to forward the preliminary articles necessary for settlements, &c. in which he had taken the concurrence of his friend Sir Maurice; and it was stipulated, that the sum of two thousand per annum, which Augusta had limited to herself, had his Lordship been content to have received the residue of her estates without taking her into the bargain, should be allotted for her pin money. She had declared her averseness to being presented for some time, and even wished that formidable business to be put off till the following spring. Lord Glamore made it a means of strengthening his plea with her for an early day. She saw so much good reason in the hope of being perfectly happy from this union, that she framed no unnecessary delays, which must have arisen from an affectation,

or false delicacy, she was equally a stranger too; though every word, look, and action, proved the excess of his love, yet it was discovered in a manner so soft and gentle, that she was under no necessity to repress her grateful sense of it, lest she should betray him into an impropriety of conduct.

“Alas!” thought she, “how miserable must I have been, had Henry lived to be my husband! The violence of his attachment, so ill according with the gentleness of my nature, would have made my heart shrink within itself, instead of expanding, as it now does, with the glow of affection.”

The figure of Fanny Bendley was very prepossessing, and while she was a child had been a great favourite with young Maurice, who was educated by her father. Her manner was unaffected, and her personal charms much improved, by the excellent instructions she had received at home. Sir Maurice saw, if not with envy, yet with a strong desire of emulation, the happy state in which his old friend Edward Wyndham, and his Maria lived, from an union of hearts; and soon should he behold the same felicity in the lovely Augusta and her faithful Glamore. His heart longed to taste the same joys arising from wedded love. Living in habits of intimacy with the blooming Fanny, he insensibly grew attached to her, and with pleasure did Lady Brandon see it would soon be mutual.

About a week before Christmas did Sir Maurice perform the office of father to the adored Augusta, and then engaged the promise of the happy bridegroom to do him the same kind office some few weeks hence; having previously obtained the consent of

Mr. Bendley to give him his daughter Fanny, "who, nothing loth," had received his addresses with a blushing sensibility, that proved how well she deserved the affections of so worthy a man.

To say such persons, as composed this amiable society, were likely to remain happy, would be needless, and therefore we will end with this observation, which is true in every sense, though poetical, that

Blessings ever wait on virtuous deeds;
And, though 'tis late—a sure reward succeeds.

THE END.

THE
THUNDER STORM:

A MORAL TALE.

WHATEVER the young libertines about town, and the old ones also, may think of their successful attempts against the virtue of the credulous fair ones, who put themselves imprudently in their power, they may fairly be ranked among the pests of society, as they very largely contribute to the disturbance of its peace. To the lawless libertines of the age the following tale is particularly addressed. May the fate of him on whose account it was written, sink deep into their hearts, and deter them from pursuits which, though not punishable by human laws, deserve the severest that can be inflicted.

Thrown into the gay world, before he had entered into his 19th year, with an affluent fortune at his disposal, and no command over his passions, Sir Frederick Wootton distinguished himself by a strong propensity to many vices which degrade the man, and disgrace the gentleman. His passion for women, however, was predominant, and in the gratification of that passion, he scrupled not to be guilty of the meanest, as well as most unwarrantable, not to say criminal actions.

As Sir Frederick associated chiefly with young

fellows of his own principles, and addicted to the same pleasures, he received no checks to his proceedings from their admonitions, or reproofs. He was at length, however, both admonished and reprehended by a man with whose company he did not expect to be troubled, after his behaviour to him. He had been a student with him in the same college at Cambridge; but never thoroughly liked him because he was, in his opinion, too rigid in his ways of thinking, and wanted spirit: in other words, because he would not be as wicked as himself.

Mr. Morden, though he was not surprised at his fellow-student's breaking off all acquaintance with him on the great change in his affairs, was concerned at it, as he had really some qualities which might have been denominated amiable.

Mr. Morden, in consequence of the cessation of his acquaintance with Sir Frederick, had, for some years, never troubled him with a single visit: and had he not been provoked by his trifling with a young lady for whom he had a sincere regard, as a friend, he would not have, perhaps, visited him again.

It was Sir Frederick's common practice, if he found the girls whom he wanted to seduce too much upon their guard to yield to his dishonourable solicitations, to amuse them with promises of marriage; and those promises being gilded by his title, too often enabled him to carry his point without the performance of them. By such promises he had lured several credulous females, to their undoing, and he was taking an infinite deal of pains to add a Miss Norris to the number of the seduced, when his old fellow-collegian very unexpectedly made his appearance before him.

Mr. Morden, on his arrival at Sir Frederick's house, in Hanover Square, would not give in his name, but desired the servant to tell his master that a gentleman from the country wished to speak with him upon particular business. Thomas had received no denying orders ; he was therefore soon introduced to the baronet.

Sir Frederick at that time having just looked over, with a cruel satisfaction, a long list of frail creatures whom he had subdued, was planning future conquests.

On Mr. Morden's entering the room, he could not help starting with surprize : and, though extremely a man of the world, was disconcerted.

" You seem very much surprised to see me, Sir Frederick ; and you wonder, no doubt, what business brought me hither. You shall soon be informed. I wait on you, not upon my own account ; I wait upon you on a lady's. I come as a friend to Miss Norris."

The word Norris produced a second start. " Miss Norris !" replied he, with a careless air, affecting to be quite unacquainted with the name : " Miss Norris ! Who is she ? What is she ?"

Morden, who plainly perceived that his looks betrayed him, and that he was apprehensive of a galling lecture, pitied his condition ; but his pity was momentaneous : it instantly gave way to contempt and indignation, and he attacked him in very spirited terms for his keeping a woman of sense and virtue in a state of suspense concerning his designs. " If you intend to marry her," continued he, " your behaviour is ridiculous : if your intentions are dishonourable, you act, let me tell you, an infamous part."

“ Infamous ! ” exclaimed Sir Frederick violently agitated, **“ I have not been used to this kind of language, Sir ; and by G—d I will not bear it from any man breathing. ”**

Mr. Morden, not in the least intimidated, answered with his usual calmness upon every occasion, **“ There is nothing in my language, Sir Frederick, of which I am ashamed : I do not say you are absolutely infamous, but I again say, that you will act an infamous part if your intentions with regard to Miss Norris, are dishonourable ; and I am afraid they are so, from the manner in which you behave to her. It is cruel to avail yourself of her affection for you, to keep her sighing for the performance of your promise to her. You cannot but suppose that your taking no steps to perform it, must make her very unhappy. She loves you too well not to wish for an honourable union with you, your title and estate quite out of the question. Should you desert her, your desertion may prove fatal to her : she will certainly rather die, than have the wish of her heart gratified at the expense of her virtue. ”**

When Mr. Morden paused, he said, **“ I don’t know what you mean, Sir, by troubling me in this way ; nor do I see what business you have to be so inquisitive about my designs with regard to Lucy Norris : I do not think it at all necessary to acquaint you with my designs of any sort ; and therefore, if you have nothing else to say to me, I must take the liberty to request you to leave my house. ”**

Mr. Morden was determined not to leave the spot till he had entered more deeply into the subject which engaged his whole attention.

In consequence of this determination, Mr. Morden began to read a very sensible, though rather severe lecture against libertinism in general, and against the seduction of women in particular. He talked indeed, in so forcible, as well as so free a style, that he almost persuaded him to spend the remainder of his days like a true man of honour; a very different being from him, commonly called so by a violent misapplication of one of the most respectable words in the English language.

When Mr. Morden had, with a secret delight (for the goodness of his heart was equal to the goodness of his understanding) found that what he had said not only gave no offence, but seemed to make the wished for impression upon the mind of the hearer, he with a natural and easy transition, proceeded to his behaviour to Miss Norris; and by expatiating largely on the various merits of that lady, obtained an answer from him which gave him additional pleasure.

Sir Frederick having thanked his monitor for his friendly efforts to convince him of the errors of his conduct, and to induce him to renounce them, told him that he was exceedingly obliged to him for his visit, and that he would, as soon as some little affairs of his were settled, go down to Berkshire, and offer Miss Norris his hand.

Mr. Morden was so thoroughly satisfied with the concluding words of Sir Frederick's last speech, that he took his leave in a short time after he had declared the pleasure received, went home, and wrote immediately to Miss Norris to prepare her for the reception of her lover in the happiest dispositions imaginable.

“How finely I have hummed this bookish fellow,

who has pored over the old philosophers so long that he will never make any figure in the world! His notions about virtue and religion may do well enough for a parson; but, by G—d, they are sufficient to render a gentleman contemptible.”

Miss Norris was not a beauty of the first magnitude, but handsome enough to be taken notice of by almost every man who beheld her; even in public assemblies (though she seldom went to them) she had never the mortification to be overlooked. An unexpected alteration in her circumstances had made a retired life prudent, and she soon began to be more than contented—to be happy in retirement. She was, indeed, very eligibly situated, in the pleasantest part of Berkshire, at the house of a worthy farmer, who had been a tenant of her father's, and who had married a servant whom her mother, with reason, greatly esteemed for her many valuable qualities. By this good couple she was gratefully, faithfully attended, and she was extremely respected by all the ladies in the neighbourhood; beloved by all who were acquainted with her intrinsic worth. It was upon a visit to a family near the cottage at which she resided, that Sir Frederick first fell into her company. He saw, heard, admired, loved. Loved! no—a coarser word would be more proper; for he certainly wished to enjoy her upon his own terms, and when her situation was explained to him, he, coxcomb-like, reckoned upon her fall. His distinguishing behaviour to her alarmed the whole village: he made his addresses to her in form, and all the girls who envied her were afraid that he would marry her; they were sometimes, however, relieved, in the midst of their

apprehensions, by their hopes; they hoped to see her his mistress; they could not bear the thoughts of seeing her his wife.

Having been thrown into a train of agreeable reflections by the perusal of Mr. Morden's letter, Miss Norris received Sir Frederick with more pleasure than she had yet done; and when the first effusions were over on both sides, Sir Frederick told his Lucy that he was come to acquaint her with his final resolution to offer her his hand; and he informed her, at his departure, that he would in a few days fix his wedding one.

Miss Norris sitting one afternoon, in a pretty arbour at the bottom of the garden, in which she often amused herself, received the following note from Sir Frederick:

“If my dear Miss Norris will favour her fond lover with a visit at Farmer Golding's, she will not, he flatters himself, repent of her condescension; as he has something to communicate of the utmost consequence to her.”

By this note Miss Norris was for some time perplexed: after much hesitation, however, she returned a complying answer.

Sir Frederick, transported with the answer to his note, waited for the writer of it with the greatest impatience, as he had secured all the Goldings in his interest. At last, his patience being exhausted, he sallied forth in order to meet the destined victim.

While he was walking up and down a field through which he knew she must pass, if she came, as he naturally supposed she would, the nearest way, he was so much affected by a sudden glowing heat in the air

that he could not proceed. Feeling himself insupportably drowsy, he lay down, and in a few minutes fell asleep.

Miss Norris, having been strongly advised by the worthy couple with whom she lodged, not to go far from home that afternoon, as the general appearance of the sky prognosticated a thunder-storm, remained for some time in a suspended state: but her love at length got the better of her fears, and she ventured, even while she heard a rumbling at a distance, the moment she quitted the farm.

When she arrived at the spot where Sir Frederick lay asleep, she started: concluding, in the hurry of her spirits, that he was dead, she screamed. Finding, however, upon a nearer approach, that he breathed, she innocently spread a handkerchief over his face, and offered up a fervent prayer to heaven to protect him.

The pressure of the handkerchief upon his face, slight as it was, waked him. When he saw his Lucy standing over him in the tenderest attitude, his passion for her became too violent to be controuled. In spite of the thunder rolling over his head, he attempted, inflamed by opposition, to force her to the gratification of his desires: but before he could accomplish his brutal design, he was struck to the ground a corpse.

THE END.

